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THE RECTOR's SON.

VOL. III.

BRITISH MUSEUM

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THE

RECTOR's SON,

IN THREE VOLUMES,

By ANNE PLUMPTRE,

AUTHOR OF ANTOINETTE.

VOL. III.

L'imagination ne sauroit inventer tant de diverses contrariétés qu'il y en a naturellement dans le cœur de chaque personne.

ROCHEFOUCAULD.

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THE RECTOR's SON.

CHAPTER I.

The sea-beat mariner, who on the shrouds
Hangs at the mercy of the warring winds,
Rock'd by the howling Spirits of the deep,
May count him in a cradle of repose,
And think the roaring blast a Zephyr's breath,
Compar'd with Passion's wild and madd'ning storm.

Mrs. Robinson.

SOON after Mrs. Meadows's return to Calcutta, the queſtion of the validity of Weymar's bond was to be tried, when it was expected that Dawkins's ſincerity would be put to a farther teſt. The bond had been ſhewn to many perſons; and all who had ſeen it, and were acquainted with Charles's writing, were ſo confident of the ſignature's being his, that unleſs ſtrong proof could be brought of its having been fraudulently obtained, there ſeemed no poſſibility but that the attorney's claim muſt

be eſtabliſhed. Even Benington could ſo little perſuade himſelf that the ſignature was not his friend's, that he had little hopes from the powerful evidence to the contrary, which Dawkins had promiſed.

But Weymar rendered the production of any evidence unneceſſary, as on the day of trial he did not appear to ſupport his claim; conſequently it was ſet aſide, and Amelia and Indamora remained in quiet poſſeſſion of their property. But Amelia was ſtill perplexed, nor could by any means ſatisfactorily ſolve a thouſand little circumſtances relative to the affair. She had ſtrange ſuſpicions hanging about her with regard to Dawkins; yet having no fair pretence for refuſing to ſee him, ſhe did not abſolutely forbid his viſits, though ſhe ſought excuſes to elude them whenever ſhe could with propriety.

On theſe occaſions he never talked of his paſſion, but ſighed frequently, and ſeemed ſo abſorbed by it, and ſo miſerable, that whether this were the genuine effect of feeling, or a maſk he choſe to aſſume, it was equally diſagreeable and diſtreſſing. She was glad, therefore,

fore, to embrace an opportunity of going to Eden to attend Mrs. Rainsford in her lying-in, when ſhe could at once be of uſe to her friend, and remove herſelf for a while out of Dawkins's way; while, at the ſame time, the ſituation of that friend would preclude her being haraſſed with the perpetual round of company, which at other times reſorted to Eden.

Here ſhe enjoyed a ſhort interval of undiſturbed tranquillity; but when Mrs. Rainsford was recovered from her confinement, ſhe was obliged to return again to their uſual public life, which ſo ill accorded with Mrs. Meadows's inclinations, that ſhe removed once more to Calcutta, reſolving, as the buſineſs which brought her to India ſeemed quite at an end, to return to England in the next ſhip that ſhould ſail.

From the time of Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford's ſettling at Eden, they had always devoted Sunday to receiving company, on which day Captain and Mrs. Yelverton, and (after their marriage) Mr. and Mrs. Macdonnel, were conſtant gueſts, the reſt were caſual viſitors.

Beſides theſe, they gave occaſional entertainments, one of which, a ſplendid ball, was to take place not long after Mrs. Rainsford's recovery, to which the Macdonnels were of courſe invited. Not that either the Colonel or Mrs. Rainsford had any ſatisfaction in the ſociety of theſe young people: The Lieutenant was by no means a man ſuited to their taſte, nor, but as Cecilia's huſband, could they have tolerated him; and as for Cecilia herſelf, they ſaw, with the deepeſt concern, that far from becoming more diſcreet in conſequence of her marriage, ſhe even carried her indiſcretions to ſtill greater and more dangerous lengths. Her coquettiſh airs were played off in all companies, and with every man indiſcriminately, till in a ſhort time the world began to cenſure her conduct very freely, and many perſons ſcrupled not to ſay, that ſhe had entered into the marriage ſtate only as a cloak for her gallantries. Some even went ſo far as to affirm, that Colonel Rainsford had bribed Macdonnel to take her, with the hopes of promotion, elſe the Lieutenant, who had ſeen enough before-hand to convince

convince him what ſort of woman ſhe was, never could have thought of ſuch an alliance.

Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford were the more hurt with theſe obſervations, as they ſaw her giving but too much occaſion for them. They believed her, indeed, yet innocent; but thought her ſituation ſo critical, that they lived in conſtant apprehenſions for the conſequence. Their farther interpoſition was, however, out of the queſtion; all Colonel Rainsford could do, was to endeavour to get Macdonnel removed from Calcutta, in the hope that change of place and ſociety, might effect an alteration in Cecilia's conduct; and in this attempt he had a proſpect of being very ſoon ſucceſsful, when a ſtorm, which had long been gathering, burſt out, and involved him in a train of ills equally unexpected and undeſerved.

At the ball at Eden, Cecilia's behaviour to the gentlemen gave ſo much offence to the ladies, (perhaps becauſe they ſaw her more noticed than themſelves; for we believe that ſuch motives have their influence in India as well as in England) that on the next morning,

ſome of them, and thoſe too of the higheſt rank, ſignified to Mrs. Rainsford, that if ſhe ſhould continue to receive Mrs. Macdonnel at her parties, they muſt, however reluctantly, be compelled to decline her acquaintance.

This ſhe had long dreaded: She well knew the exceſs to which punctilio was carried in thoſe parts; and that when a woman's character had been aſperſed, whether truly or falſely, ſhe was no longer conſidered as a proper perſon to be introduced into company. She felt, moreover, but too ſenſibly, that Cecilia's behaviour had been ſuch, as, according to eſtabliſhed cuſtom, juſtified the ſtigmas caſt upon her; for it had been either the height of thoughtleſſneſs or of depravity;—of the former only, as ſhe believed; but when any circumſtance will admit of two conſtructions, it is ſeldom the practice of the world, to view it on the favourable ſide.

Had Mrs. Rainsford been in a ſituation to act from her own opinions only, it is poſſible ſhe might have anſwered, that ſhe would aſk whomſoever ſhe ſhould pleaſe to her houſe; and they were at full liberty to uſe their own

pleaſure

pleaſure in meeting or not meeting them. But it is one of the fines affixed to elevated rank, that it does not admit of this noble independence; and thus Mrs. Rainsford had no reſource left, but to conſider how ſhe could yield to the public voice in a way the leaſt wounding to Cecilia. For this conſideration, however, little time was allowed, as the following day was Sunday, when Mrs. Macdonnel would of courſe be at Eden, unleſs ſome ſteps were taken to prevent her; and ſhould any of the ladies, who had objected to meeting her, be there alſo, the Colonel and herſelf would be placed in a very embarraſſing ſituation, ſince they would be conſidered as having affronted their company moſt unpardonably.

After much conſultation, it was agreed, between Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford, that the only immediate ſtep to be taken, was entirely to put off the party at Eden, on the following day; and thus gain time to conſider in what way to proceed. But how to find a fair pretext for doing this, was the next difficulty; and as the moſt plauſible they could invent, Colonel Rainsford availed himſelf of ſome

buſineſs he had to tranſact at Fort-William; not indeed of ſo urgent a nature, but that it might have been poſtponed for four or five days without inconvenience; but which, as he was particularly exact in all matters of buſineſs, he could, with great propriety, fix for that day, without his real motives becoming apparent. On this expedition Mrs. Rainsford was obliged to accompany him, ſince, had ſhe remained at home, the Colonel's abſence would not have been eſteemed a ſufficient reaſon for declining to receive company.

This being arranged, a circular card was immediately diſpatched to all who were accuſtomed to form the Sunday circle at Eden, ſignifying, that Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford were under the neceſſity of being abſent on the following day, and muſt therefore requeſt to be excuſed receiving their friends; but on the next Sunday, hoped to ſee them as uſual. At the ſame time, a note, of a more friendly nature, was ſent to Captain and Mrs. Yelverton, and the following to Cecilia, written by Mrs. Rainsford:

My

MY DEAR CECILIA,

I AM ſorry to ſay, that it is quite out of our power to receive our friends to-morrow, ſince unforeſeen buſineſs obliges both the Colonel and myſelf to be abſent from Eden the whole day. We hope, however, that this will not make a long delay in the pleaſure we ſhall have in ſeeing you; and ſhall endeavour to fix an early day in next week, when we can aſk for your's and Mr. Macdonnel's company in a ſociable way.

I am, my dear Cecilia,

Your's, with great regard,

ANNA RAINSFORD.

Cecilia was wrought up to the moſt violent pitch of rage and reſentment on reading this billêt. Her vanity had been deeply wounded by a thouſand ſlights ſhe had received from many of the company the evening before; and ſhe now thought the infection had ſpread to Mrs. Rainsford herſelf, and that this was only a prelude to her being baniſhed entirely from

the ſociety which met at Eden. In one moment ſhe forgot all the kindneſs ſhe had received from Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford; ſhe thought only of the preſent ſuppoſed injury; and venting the moſt bitter expreſſions of indignation againſt them, ſent back the meſſenger without a word of anſwer.

This was but too plain an indication of her ſentiments, and gave infinite concern to Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford, who ſaw, in this trait, an ill omen of the behaviour they were to expect from her in future:—They determined, however, to give her a few days for reflection before they took any farther ſteps, and to adhere to their original plan. Accordingly, they went early the next morning to Fort William, on the appointed buſineſs, which was finiſhed, and they on the point of returning, when they were met by Captain Yelverton, who deſired the Colonel, inſtead of going home, to accompany him to Calcutta on an affair which, he ſaid, was of ſome importance, and would not admit of delay.

He then drew him aſide, and after a few minutes converſation, the Colonel came back, and

and deſired Mrs. Rainsford to return home, as he muſt attend Captain Yelverton, and probably be abſent all night. Mrs. Rainsford was alarmed;—"Good God," ſhe exclaimed, "what does this myſtery mean? and on what errand are you called away?—I dread, leſt it be of the moſt fatal kind!"

"Be not alarmed, my love; I hope there is no cauſe;—it is rather an unpleaſant buſineſs to be ſure; but I truſt, will not terminate in fighting, if that is your apprehenſion."

"Oh, aſſure me but of that, and I am content; but your life is ſo dear to me, that I cannot ſupport the leaſt idea of its being endangered."

"Indeed, my deareſt Anna, you may make yourſelf quite eaſy on that head; I ſee not the leaſt danger to my life, and ſhall hope to be with you again to-morrow;"—and ſo ſaying they parted; the Colonel and Captain Yelverton went to Calcutta, and Mrs. Rainsford returned to Eden.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER II.

Here are a few of the unpleasantest words
That ever blotted paper!

SHAKSPEARE.

MRS. Rainsford found ſeveral letters, which had arrived at Eden during their abſence; and, among others, one directed to the Colonel, which ſhe knew to be Cecilia's writing. She immediately concluded that it contained an apology for her rude diſmiſſal of their meſſenger the day before; and anxious to ſee what ſhe might ſay, ſhe broke the ſeal without heſitation, as ſhe and the Colonel were in the habit of opening each other's letters, by mutual agreement, when ſhe read as follows:

MY

MY DEAREST, BEST-BELOVED EDWARD,

IS it then come to this?—And has the watchful eye of Jealouſy, though hitherto deceived, at laſt diſcovered the intercourſe which we have ſo long ſucceſsfully concealed under the ſpecious veil of Friendſhip?—And muſt we meet no more?—Oh, my tortured heart! Such, I fear, is the meaning of the note which I received yeſterday.—But I cannot bear that idea—nor will I ſubmit to it;—no; the ſtroke that ſeparates me for ever from the man I love, ſhall ſeparate me from life alſo!—For, after ſuch a ſeparation, what is there in this world worth living for?

This language to any perſon but yourſelf, might appear ſtrange from one who is now the wife of another man!—Wife!—Ah, that word!—And wherefore is ſhe *ſo?*—Wherefore, but becauſe the miſtreſs was thus rendered more ſecure.—Yes, Edward, you know with what reluctance I conſented to the ſacrifice I have made;—you know that nothing but my mad paſſion for you could have induced me to ſhackle myſelf thus.—What did I care for the world!—You were my only

object!

object!—I lived but for you!—I ſaw but you!—and if you were gratified I was happy!—My reputation I valued not.—I thought with Eloiſa, that pattern for all true lovers,

Fame, Wealth, and Honour, what are you to Love!
The jealous god, when we profane his fires,
Thoſe reſtleſs paſſions in revenge inſpires;
And bids them make mistaken mortals groan,
Who ſeek in Love for aught but Love alone!

But you perſuaded me that *your* intereſt, *your* happineſs, the continuance of our intercourſe, depended on the ſteps I took, and theſe were motives too powerful to be reſiſted. But oh, falſe, falſe-hearted Edward, you were tired of me: I was too eaſy a conqueſt, and your roving heart now wants ſome other object of gratification; ſome more reſerved, unyielding fair, who, by reſiſtance, may inflame your paſſion.—But, Edward, I warn you to beware the effects of ill-requited tenderneſs!—She ſhall not taſte, unmoleſted, the joys which I am to know no more!—No; my injured form ſhall haunt you,—even in her arms, ſhall haunt you—Nor

ſhall

ſhall the dull and holy marriage-bed, ſcreen you from my juſt upbraidings.

And can you forſake me, Edward?—Can you forget thoſe hours of happineſs, which, to the imaginations of your wife, and of the world, were ſuppoſed to be devoted to inſtruction and reproof on your part, and to patient attention on mine; but which lovers like ourſelves, knew much better how to employ, and which, however long they might appear to others, were too ſhort for us to tell all the tender emotions of our ſouls.

You have charged me not to write to you!—Oh, with what difficulty have I hitherto complied with the cruel injunction;—but I cannot reſiſt writing any longer. I live in torments, and will know my fate.—Tell me then, Edward, I conjure you, am I to be ſacrificed to a jealous wife?—Am I not to ſee you any more?—And remember, that my life or death depends on your anſwer!—If I am no more to hold the place in your heart, which I have done, it is over with me; but if yet any ſparks remain in your boſom of that unbounded love, which you have often ſworn,

haſten

haſten hither, and comfort her who knows no happineſs but in your arms!—Oh, could I but be aſſured that your heart has undergone no change, I could fly with you to the remoteſt corner of the world: The deſart ſhores of Africa, or the frightful wilds and foreſts of North-America, bleſt in your love, would be to me a paradiſe, while thoſe delightful gardens, juſtly called Eden, where we have often wandered together, liſtening to each other's raptures, without you, would appear a dreary and deſolate waſte.

Ah, come to me,—write to me,—tell me, barbarous Edward, what I am to expect; let me know the worſt, for this ſuſpenſe is hell itſelf. But however falſe you may be, I can never be other than

Your faithfully devoted,

CECILIA MACDONNEL.

Mrs. Rainsford looked again and again over this moſt unaccountable letter, and knew not whether to believe her eyes as ſhe read;—ſhe was perfectly horror-ſtricken! Could it be poſſible that her huſband was the villain here repre-

repreſented, was the queſtion ſhe firſt aſked herſelf? — Good God! — to her he had always ſeemed to entertain even ſtricter notions of honour and integrity than are held by the generality of mankind; — but this letter made him appear the moſt diſguſting of hypocrites. On the other hand, was it poſſible that Cecilia ſhould write thus, if they had not been criminal, — blaſt her own character without any reaſon? This ſeemed even more impoſſible than the other! — In ſhort, it appeared abſolutely incredible that Rainsford ſhould be capable of ſuch villainy: Yet, how, otherwiſe account for ſuch a letter?

Racked with theſe tormenting reflections, ſhe paſſed the night in the extremeſt miſery. Wounded as her heart muſt be by any inſtance of her huſband's infidelity, that now before her was attended with every circumſtance that could add to its horror and to his criminality. He had ſeduced a young woman, placed under his protection, on the ſpecious pretence of giving her friendly advice and admonition on ſome improprieties in her behaviour; and in order to throw a veil

over

over this illicit intercourſe, had then endeavoured to promote a marriage between her and one of his oldeſt friends, a man of rank and reſpectability; and this failing, had completed his guilt and treachery, by ſuffering her to be united to one who muſt be ignorant of her ſituation, and ſuppoſe her a woman of honour and virtue.

It was altogether a complication of wickedneſs, on which the more ſhe reflected the more horror ſhe felt;—ſhe revolved in her mind a thouſand and a thouſand times, how ſhe had beſt proceed in ſo new, ſo extraordinary, and ſo diſtreſſing a ſituation, and at length ſhe reſolved to write to Mrs. Meadows, of whoſe underſtanding and judgment ſhe had the higheſt opinion, to conſult with her on what was to be done. Accordingly, in the morning, ſhe encloſed Cecilia's letter in one to her friend, which ſhe had juſt concluded, as the name of Mrs. Yelverton was announced, and that lady entered the room.

The idea immediately ſtruck her, that ſhe was come to impart ſomething relative to Colonel

Colonel Rainsford, as he had accompanied Captain Yelverton to Calcutta the evening before, and ſhe had no doubt that the buſineſs which called him thither, was a link of the terrible chain of guilt which ſeemed now about coming to light. She turned as pale as death, therefore, on Zelinda's entrance, and ſeemed ready to faint; which the latter obſerving, ſaid, "My dear Mrs. Rainsford, you quite alarm me,—you ſeem very ill!"

The anxiety with which ſhe ſpoke, only confirmed Mrs. Rainsford's ſuſpicions more ſtrongly; but wiſhing to carry it off as well as ſhe could, ſhe endeavoured to recover herſelf, and anſwered,—"Oh dear, no; it is really nothing at all; my head aches a little, but it will ſoon be over,—it is not of any conſequence."

"But indeed, Mrs. Rainsford, you alarm me!"

"Pray make yourſelf eaſy, my dear Zelinda;—it is really of no conſequence."—Then wiſhing to turn the converſation, ſhe ſaid, "Have you ſeen Cecilia ſince Friday?"

Mrs. Yelverton was now equally embarraſſed;—

barraſſed;—ſhe had come over to Eden to impart ſome unpleaſant intelligence with regard to Cecilia; but ſeeing Mrs. Rainsford already ſo uneaſy, ſhe did not care to increaſe it, as ſhe muſt do by unfolding her errand, and ſhe anſwered rather in a hurried manner, —"Oh, yes, I ſupped with her laſt night."—Then wiſhing, on her ſide, to turn the converſation, ſhe went on:—"Pray, do you know how long it was ſince Colonel Rainsford and Colonel Morriſon had met, when the latter came to Calcutta?"

"Not exactly; but I believe, twelve or thirteen years, ſo I think I heard them calculating on Colonel Morriſon's firſt viſit here."

"And was he acquainted with Captain Anneſley before they met at Allahabad on the Captain's going thither, a ſhort time before Mr. Meadows's death?"

"I believe not; I think that was the beginning of their acquaintance, but they afterwards became very intimate."

"So I underſtood.—And pray, did Colonel Rainsford ever keep up a correſpondence with Morriſon!"

"Never;

"Never; they had not exchanged the leaſt intercourſe from the time of Morriſon's quitting the regiment to which Colonel Rainsford then belonged, till their late meeting;—ſo, at leaſt, I have underſtood the Colonel."

"Oh, I do'nt doubt but you are right; it muſt therefore have been from Captain Anneſley that Morriſon had heard ſo much of Cecilia."

Mrs. Rainsford could by no means comprehend what could induce Zelinda to theſe inquiries; and her imagination ſuggeſted that they muſt have ſome reference to the affair hanging on her mind;—"Yes," ſhe ſaid, I know that—he had—frequently heard—Captain Anneſley—mention her."——Theſe words, however, were ſpoken in ſuch a broken and inarticulate manner, that they were ſcarcely intelligible.

Mrs. Yelverton therefore again addreſſed her:—"I am really quite diſtreſſed to ſee you, Mrs. Rainsford; you certainly are very much indiſpoſed; I am ſure the Colonel would be very uneaſy if he knew it;—I will

ſend

ſend him over—indeed, you ought to have ſome advice!"

"Oh, pray do not trouble yourſelf about me; I expect the Colonel here every minute: He told me he ſhould return this morning, and I could not bear even the appearance of teaſing him with my importunities."

She then immediately turned the converſation to a quite indifferent ſubject, in which way it dragged on for a few minutes, when Mrs. Yelverton, plainly perceiving that her friend wiſhed to be alone, roſe up to take her leave. And now a thought occurred to Mrs. Rainsford, that ſhe might get her packet conveyed to Mrs. Meadows by means of Zelinda's ſervant, and ſo be ſpared ſending over to Calcutta on purpoſe, which ſhe wiſhed extremely to avoid, as it might occaſion ſpeculation to her huſband, ſhould he learn that ſhe had ſent thither without any oſtenſible reaſon. Accordingly, as Zelinda left the room, Mrs. Rainsford put the packet into her own ſervant's hand, ordering him to give it to Mrs. Yelverton's, and requeſt him to carry it to Mrs. Meadows.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER III.

'Tis agitation all! the quaking spreads
O'er ev'ry part; nor finds affrighted Peace
One firm, unrocking spot, on which to rest
Amid the tremor of the shiv'ring scene.

FAWCET.

BEFORE we follow Zelinda on her return to Calcutta, it will be proper to explain the occaſion of Colonel Rainsford's ſummons thither the evening before, as well as that of her viſit to Eden.

Captain Anneſley had remained at Calcutta from the time he was firſt introduced there to the reader, till after Charles Meadows's return to India in his dying ſtate. His regiment was then ordered to Allahabad, where Colonel Morriſon was, at that time, commanding officer, and he and Anneſley ſoon became much

much acquainted. Morriſon had, many years before, been ſtationed at Shrewſbury, whence he had often viſited at Sherborne, and ſeen Charles as a child. He ſoon grew exceedingly fond of him, and during the whole of his ſtay in that country, noticed him very much, nor ever loſt the recollection of his juvenile attractions.

Anneſley having one day in converſation, accidentally mentioned the name of Blandford, Morriſon inſtantly enquired, "Do you mean the Blandfords of Shropſhire?"

"Even ſo," anſwered Anneſley.

"And you are acquainted with them?"

"More than acquainted, nearly connected; my brother married Miſs Blandford."

"Good God!—and is her father alive?"

"Oh, no!—he died very lamentably and prematurely, by a fall from his horſe."

"And do you know what became of a child, the ſon of a neighbouring clergyman, whoſe education he had undertaken; one of the moſt engaging children I ever ſaw."

"I fear, by this time, dead too," ſaid Anneſley; and he proceeded to relate Charles's

tragic

tragic ſtory, concluding with ſaying, that from the ſtate in which he left him, he thought it ſcarcely poſſibly he ſhould then be alive.

This detail was both intereſting and affecting to the Colonel, while, at the ſame time, it ſeemed to make out a ſort of previous connection between himſelf and Anneſley, which drew them more cloſely together. In conſequence of this increaſed intimacy, the name of Cecilia was well known to Morriſon, before ſhe was perſonally ſo; and as her uncle was always partial to her, and had drawn her picture to the Colonel in very flattering colours, he came previouſly diſpoſed to admire her, and was, therefore, perhaps, the more eaſily entangled in her ſnares.

Thus circumſtanced, it was very natural that Morriſon, when he thought himſelf ſecure of his prize, ſhould write of his happineſs to Anneſley in very glowing terms, and equally natural that Anneſley ſhould be pleaſed with his niece's proſpect. Nor was it leſs to be expected, that when the affair was ſo unpleaſantly terminated, Morriſon ſhould lament his diſappointment to his friend in the ſame

proportion that he had before exulted in his felicity; yet in all that he ſaid on the ſubject, he never hinted at Rainsford's conduct being in the leaſt degree objectionable; but on the contrary, always mentioned it as marked throughout with the moſt diſtinguiſhed honour and propriety.

Cependant, cet oiseau qui prône les merveilles,
Ce monstre composé de bouches et d'oreilles,
Qui sans cesse volant de climats en climats,
Dit par tout ce qu'il sait, et ce qu'il ne sait pas.

BOILEAU.

In one of her flights buzzed in the ears of Captain Anneſley, that Rainsford's behaviour had been altogether ſhuffling and prevaricating; and that he had, underhand, endeavoured to prevent the marriage with Morriſon, however outwardly he had appeared to ſeek its promotion, becauſe he wiſhed to reſerve his ward for Macdonnel, who, in return, was to undertake ſome dirty job which Rainsford wiſhed to accompliſh, but in which he did not care to appear himſelf.

So extremely lame and improbable was this ſtory,

ſtory, that had the valiant Captain reflected, for one moment, he muſt have treated it with deſerved contempt. But he was not one of thoſe dull, plodding genius's, who reflect before they act;—no, he reverſed this common-place mode of procedure;—it was his plan to act firſt, and then conſider whether he had done right or wrong. Accordingly, without ſtopping to weigh the matter, he obtained leave of abſence from his regiment for a ſhort time, and ſet off for Calcutta, as the declared champion of his niece, and, like another Saul, breathing nothing but vengeance and ſlaughter againſt the man by whom he ſuppoſed her to have been ſo cruelly wronged.

In this temper he arrived at his deſtination, on the memorable Sunday which carried Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford to Fort-William, when preſenting himſelf before Captain Yelverton, with whom he was previouſly acquainted, he laid open the occaſion of his journey, and requeſted him to be his ſecond at the meditated rencontre. But Yelverton, though ſufficiently warm himſelf, to enter

fully into the Captain's feelings, yet knew too much of the affair to ſuffer it to proceed at once to extremities; and therefore, repreſenting it to Anneſley as it really ſtood, he ſo far pacified him as to induce him to conſent to an interview with Rainsford, before he ſhould ſend the challenge. For this purpoſe, Yelverton went himſelf to Fort-William, to perſuade the Colonel to accompany him that evening to Calcutta, to ſettle the affair, inſtead of returning to Eden.

The interview had all the effect that could be wiſhed; Anneſley was perfectly ſatisfied, and made an apology to Rainsford for his unjuſt ſuſpicions, and they parted extremely good friends, Anneſley promiſing to dine at Eden the next day. The Colonel then went to Mrs. Meadows's houſe, where he purpoſed ſtaying all night, as it was then late, and he had buſineſs to tranſact with the Chief-Juſtice the next morning; and Anneſley, with Captain and Mrs. Yelverton, went to ſpend the evening with the Macdonnels.

To this viſit Zelinda felt the ſtrongeſt reluctance. She was with Cecilia the preceding day,

day when Mrs. Rainsford's note came, and ſaw and heard with inexpreſſible concern the manner in which it was received, and the violent denunciations uſed by her infatuated friend on that occaſion. She united her efforts with thoſe of Macdonnel to pacify her, and induce her to ſend, if not a written, at leaſt a verbal meſſage of civility, in reply to Mrs. Rainsford, to whoſe conduct they juſtly urged there was no reaſonable ground for exception. But Cecilia could not liſten to reaſon, and wrought herſelf at laſt into ſuch a phrenzy at their oppoſition, that they were forced to comply, and diſmiſs the meſſenger, leſt worſt conſequences might enſue.

But ſuch compliances with paſſion are a mere momentary gratification to the incenſed object, for anger no longer oppoſed outwardly, recoils on itſelf, and creates a reſtleſs diſſatisfaction at its own exceſſes. Thus it was with Cecilia,—ſhe wiſhed to revenge herſelf on Mrs. Rainsford for a ſuppoſed offence, but in doing ſo ſhe cheriſhed a ſcorpion which ſtung her own boſom. She ſpent the reſt of that day in a fever of irritation, diſſatisfied

with herſelf, diſſatisfied with all around her, inſiſting that ſhe would not part with Zelinda, yet receiving no apparent pleaſure from her company, and was only lulled to reſt at night by a powerful opiate.

Macdonnel was perplexed how to act. He wiſhed to keep on good terms with the Rainsfords, and could not but feel that Cecilia was in the wrong, nor had any reaſon, but from a conſciouſneſs that her own behaviour had in ſome meaſure deſerved it, to ſuppoſe their friendly diſpoſitions towards her in any way altered. But while he ſaw that if ſhe ſhould perſevere in treating them in ſuch a manner, all intercourſe between them muſt inevitably ceaſe, he yet knew not by what means to ſoften her reſentment, and could only reſt in the hope that a night of compoſure might aſſiſt in producing this happy effect.

And he ſaw indeed with ſatisfaction, that when ſhe awoke in the morning ſhe ſeemed ſomewhat more compoſed, and carefully avoiding any hints towards the ſubject which had ruffled her, he thought this compoſure, during the former part of the day, rather encreaſed

creaſed than diminiſhed;—ſo alſo thought Zelinda, who, as ſhe had promiſed, ſpent the greateſt part of the morning with her. But Captain Anneſley's arrival entirely overturned theſe flattering appearances, ſince as he did not chuſe immediately to make Cecilia acquainted with his errand, ſhe was left to her own vague conjectures on the ſubject, and conſequently thoſe conjectures would be influenced by the preſent bias of her mind. She had no doubt, therefore, that complaints of her conduct had been conveyed to him by the Rainsfords, and he ſummoned to Calcutta as her monitor on the occaſion; and in this ſhe was the more fully confirmed, as he had not on his arrival come directly to her houſe, but had gone firſt to Captain Yelverton's. Thus ſhe viewed him with an eye of the moſt ſelf-tormenting jealouſy.

This the Captain himſelf, who was by no means the moſt diſcerning of mortals, could not perceive. To Zelinda, however, it was obvious, and ſhe wiſhed therefore to keep him as much as poſſible out of his niece's way. But this was not to be done;—for after he

found that the rupture with Morriſon originated entirely with Cecilia herſelf, and that the principal objection ſhe had urged againſt the match was his age, he ſuddenly wheeled round to her ſide, ſwore he thought the girl was right in preferring a handſome ſpirited young fellow to an old one, and he loved her the better for it; nor would he be content without going and drinking a bumper with the young couple, to their happineſs, that very evening.

Never was an evening of greater miſery to poor Zelinda.—Cecilia appeared at firſt wrapped in gloom and depreſſion, but after a ſhort time, ſtarting as from a reverie, ſhe ran into the wildeſt flights of extravagance in her converſation, laughing in the moſt ridiculous manner at whatever was ſaid, and no longer ſeeming jealous or apprehenſive of her uncle's admonitions. He, in the mean time, plied his bumpers to her happineſs ſo liberally, that he ſoon became as extravagant as herſelf; and as he was always particularly diſpoſed to gallantry when thus elevated, and always, moreover, very full of admiration of his niece, he

began

began at laſt to grow extremely free and forward in his advances, while Cecilia's mind was by this time in a ſtate of too much wildneſs and diſorder to endeavour to repreſs him, or indeed to be thoroughly ſenſible of the impropriety of his behaviour.

Yelverton ſeveral times propoſed their going home, as the Captain was to be their gueſt; but Anneſley damned him for a dull, ſober, ſpiritleſs dog, and, by God, he would not ſtir, no not he; he was very well pleaſed with his quarters, and let thoſe that were otherwiſe take themſelves away, but not expect that he was ſo ſoon to be tired of good company. —And then he filled another bumper, and made farther fine ſpeeches to the ladies, and attempted to be very ſarcaſtic on Yelverton; at all which Cecilia laughed immoderately, while he chucked her under the chin, and rejoiced, he ſaid, to ſee that matrimony had not damped her ſpirits.

Macdonnel ſat in an agony. —Warm to exceſs in his temper, theſe freedoms were by no means grateful to his feelings, though, from the relative ſituations of the parties, they could

hardly afford grounds for actual jealouſy. He could not but wiſh, however, for an end to this ſcene, but how to accompliſh that was the difficulty.—As maſter of the houſe, to deny his gueſt wine was ſo contrary to the manners of a gentleman, that he ſcarcely knew how to take ſuch a ſtep; but at length, urged by Yelverton, he did reſolve on it, as the only effectual one for the releaſe of the company. Anneſley now ſwore at Macdonnel as much as he had before damned Yelverton; but as he found him reſolute in ſtopping the circulation of the bottle, he at length conſented to depart, and thus an end was put to a ſcene which to all but himſelf had been one of purgatory; unleſs indeed Cecilia might alſo be excepted, who, if ſhe felt not pleaſure at what paſſed, had at leaſt at that moment not ſufficient ſenſibility to be wounded.

When they were departed, the irritation of her mind took another turn, and ſhe grew extremely enraged at Macdonnel for driving away her uncle, proteſting that a general conſpiracy was formed for excluding her from all ſociety; but this ſhe would not bear, and if her

her huſband ſhould continue to treat her thus, ſhe ſhould no longer conſider the marriage tie as binding, but would leave him, and throw herſelf into the protection of thoſe from whom ſhe might experience greater kindneſs. Macdonnel endeavoured one while to ſooth, then to remonſtrate with her, but ſhe would liſten neither to argument nor expoſtulation, and when he entreated her to retire to reſt, hoping by this means ſhe might become compoſed, ſhe broke out into expreſſions of ſtill greater fury, proteſting ſhe never would reſt again till ſhe had brought all her enemies into ſubmiſſion, and emancipated herſelf from the chains in which ſhe was now held.

This phrenzy continued to encreaſe, till by the next morning ſhe grew ſo outrageous, and made ſo deſperate an attempt on her own life, as to render confinement neceſſary. And now ſhe uttered a thouſand incoherent expreſſions relative to her huſband and Rainsford, whom ſhe affirmed had killed each other, nor would ſhe be perſuaded that Macdonnel was really that huſband ſtill alive, but inſiſted that he was ſome fiend come to torment her. Even from

Zelinda ſhe hid her face when ſhe entered the room, crying out in an agony that ſhe was not guilty, and her reproaches were equally unkind and unjuſt, though not a word had been uttered by Zelinda bearing the leaſt tendency to reproach. Thus was it evident that her mind laboured under ſome painful impreſſion, but her ravings were ſtill too unconnected to afford any clue to its diſcovery. To have informed Mrs. Rainsford of theſe particulars was the occaſion of Zelinda's viſit to Eden.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER IV.

O! plague me heaven, plague me with all the woes
That man can suffer! root up my possessions,
Shipwreck my far-sought ballast in the haven,
Fire all my cities, burn my dukedoms down!
Let midnight wolves howl in my desart chambers!
May the earth yawn! shatter the frame of nature!
Let the wreck'd orbs in whirlwinds round me move!
But save me from the rage of jealous love.

LEE.

NEVER could a letter of ſo much importance as Mrs. Rainsford's to Mrs. Meadows, have fallen into more unfortunate hands than the ſervant's to whoſe care it was entruſted. This man, Shepherd by name, was formerly a ſoldier in the regiment to which Rainsford belonged at his firſt coming over to India, and had been concerned, with three of his comrades, in a very atrocious affair of

plundering

plundering a houſe near Allahabad, and murdering its inhabitants. This outrage was at firſt attributed to ſome perſons of the country, and Rainsford was particularly inſtrumental in detecting and bringing to juſtice its real perpetrators. They were all condemned, but, before the ſentence could be carried into execution, Shepherd with another found means to eſcape; the other returned to England, but Shepherd, after various adventures, came at length to Calcutta, and tired of a vagrant life, reſolved to ſeek repoſe by going into ſervice, truſting that, after ſo many years, himſelf and his miſdemeanor were equally forgotten. After two or three unſucceſsful attempts, he ſucceeded in gaining an eſtabliſhment in Captain Yelverton's houſehold.

But always of a vindictive ſpirit, he could never forgive Rainsford the forward part he had taken in his detection, nor ceaſe to wiſh for a favourable opportunity of executing ſome concealed piece of revenge. None ſuch had hitherto occurred, but the preſent ſeemed a golden one not to be paſſed over. He knew that Captain Anneſley had come to Calcutta

cutta the day before with ſome heavy charges againſt Colonel Rainsford, and ſecretly rejoiced in the intelligence; but his joy had been ſomewhat damped by finding them ſeparate in the evening apparently good friends. He was now, however, in poſſeſſion of a letter of Mrs. Rainsford's, which might contain ſomewhat of importance, and of this he reſolved to ſatisfy himſelf, and make his own uſe of any diſcoveries with which he might thus be furniſhed.

Accordingly the moment that he arrived at home, he opened the packet and examined its contents; they were to him a moſt delicious regale, and he immediately began contriving by what method he could beſt make them anſwer his purpoſe. He had no doubt that this was the affair which brought Captain Anneſley to Calcutta, but was fearful that Rainsford had found means to deceive him into a belief of his innocence, and he wiſhed to throw this letter into hands which might re-inſtate Anneſley in a belief of his guilt. He was ruminating how this might beſt be accompliſhed, when his miſtreſs's bell ringing, he

he folded the letters haſtily together, and hurrying them into his pocket, attended the ſummons.

When Zelinda left Eden ſhe had very naturally fallen into reflection on what had paſſed there, and endeavoured to account to herſelf for Mrs. Rainsford's uneaſineſs. And now it firſt occurred to her, that ſhe perhaps did not know the occaſion of the Colonel's being ſummoned to Calcutta the evening before, or at leaſt was ignorant that the difference with Anneſley had been ſo happily adjuſted. This idea once ſtarted, a thouſand circumſtances appeared to confirm the conjecture, and ſhe reproached herſelf exceedingly that ſhe had never mentioned the ſubject, and relieved Mrs. Rainsford's anxieties. Yet knowing the whole affair herſelf, the poſſibility that it might not be known to her friend, had not immediately occurred to her, pre-occupied as ſhe was with her own diſtreſs on Cecilia's account.

But when poſſeſſed with the idea that ſhe had diſcovered Mrs. Rainsford's ſecret, and could remove her uneaſineſs, ſhe had more than once nearly reſolved to return back to

Eden

Eden for that purpoſe; then again ſhe recollected how irkſome her friend ſeemed to have found her intruſion, and ſhe felt reluctant to repeat it. Thus heſitating and wavering ſhe determined nothing, and arrived at her own houſe in the ſame ſtate of irreſolution; there, ſtill pondering on the ſame ſubject, ſhe alſo, at length, reſolved to conſult Mrs. Meadows, and rang to order her carriage again to conduct her thither.

Shepherd had but juſt retired with this order when a maid entered, bringing in a letter which ſhe ſaid ſhe had picked up on the ſtairs, and ſuppoſed it to belong to her miſtreſs; it was one of the very letters which the treacherous valet had violated, and which he had dropped from his pocket as he quitted her. Zelinda took it, and, caſting her eyes on the ſignature, was ſtruck with the name of Cecilia Macdonnel; ſhe looked not at the direction, ſhe ſtopped not to conſider what or whoſe it might be, the name was at that moment peculiarly intereſting to her feelings, and, by an involuntary impulſe, ſhe read the letter without heſitation.

Struck

Struck with aſtoniſhment and horror, ſhe ſunk down into a chair, and ſat like a ſtatue, with her eyes fixed on the fatal ſcroll, when the door opened, and Captain Yelverton entered. He wore a ſmile on his countenance, partly the effect of ſatisfaction at the perfect reconciliation of his friends, whom he had juſt left; partly of amuſement at the total change which had taken place in the fiery Captain's ſentiments, who was now become as warm in his admiration of Rainsford, as he had not many hours before, been bitter in his invectives and denunciations againſt him.

But the ſituation in which he found Zelinda, changed his ſmile to ſadneſs, his mirth to anxiety, and he eagerly enquired the cauſe of her conſternation. It was vain to attempt concealing it;—the letter was in her hand, and the truth muſt be known; ſhe therefore gave it him without uttering a ſyllable. He read it in haſte; ſadneſs and anxiety gave way in a moment to furious indignation!—He ſaw his friend, his fellow-countryman, injured, diſhonoured, in the moſt heart-wounding manner; he thought what his own feelings would

would be in ſuch a ſituation, and he thought of nothing elſe; for to doubt the truth of the ſtory never entered his mind. He put the letter eagerly into his pocket, and darting like lightning out of the room, flew directly to Macdonnel, and gave it into his hands, exclaiming,—"There! behold villany detected! ſuch as the heart of man could hardly conceive!"

If the indignation of the friend had been rouſed to fury at the idea of injuries ſo groſs, what ſenſations muſt they not excite in the breaſt of the diſhonoured huſband. His eyes glared, his mouth foamed with rage, he ſtamped on the ground, ſwore with all the dreadful oaths he could invent, that he would not loſe a moment, but would inſtantly ſeek that raſcal Rainsford, and they ſhould not both quit the ground alive. He ſat down and wrote a challenge, couched in the moſt abuſive language, which the dictionary of Billingſgate could furniſh, calling Rainsford a vile ſeducer of innocence, a betrayer of the truſt repoſed in him by his friend, a ſcoundrel, devoid of honour himſelf, and regardleſs what indignities he put upon

upon others, and requiring him to anſwer theſe charges at the point of his ſword.

Juſt as this eloquent effuſion was concluded, unfortunately a reinforcement arrived to the yet not half-expended wrath of the two Hibernians, in the perſon of Captain Anneſley, into whoſe hands the letter was inſtantly thruſt. He read, he raved, he ſwore, he ſtamped about the room, called Rainsford by every opprobrious epithet he could deviſe, and beſides, the moſt curſed of all hypocrites;—"For, damn me to all eternity," ſaid he, if one would not have ſuppoſed him the moſt honeſt and honourable of earthly beings by the manner in which he has been talking to me this morning, and be damned to him!—But, by God, he ſhall pay for it; for damn me, if I do'nt run him through, ſhould you miſs Macdonnel. Come, have you written a challenge?—I'll carry it to him myſelf; and by God, he ſhall know my whole mind!"

"Yes, yes," ſaid Macdonnel, giving him the billêt, "here it is; I was now going to ſend it, and Yelverton has promiſed to be my ſecond."—Away flew Anneſley in ſearch of Rainsford, with

with whom he had parted at the door of Mrs. Meadow's houſe, when he had himſelf gone to Macdonnel's; and he now met him coming out of the houſe again. "There, Sir," he cried, as he put the challenge into his hands, "your villany now ſtands fully detected, notwithſtanding all your fine-ſounding, ſpecious, hypocritical cant; and if you eſcape with life from Macdonnel's ſword, I here pledge myſelf as a ſoldier, that you ſhall not eſcape from mine; and Yelverton will be ſecond to both."

Rainsford read the paper with perfect compoſure, and anſwered, "Indeed, I am at a loſs to conjecture the meaning of Mr. Macdonnel's expreſſions; but ſhall be ready to meet both him and you, Sir, either ſingly, or, if you wiſh more effectually to ſecure your point, together.—Indeed, as you ſeem particularly anxious that I ſhould not eſcape with life, I have no objection to your adding Captain Yelverton to the party? I only aſk a delay of two days to ſettle ſome concerns, which it is of the utmoſt importance I ſhould not leave unarranged, at my departure from the world."

"Inſulting,

"Inſulting, vaunting, hypocrite!" exclaimed Anneſley,, "but know, Sir, that *we* are men of honour, how baſe and vile ſoever you may be; nor will we meet you but on fair and honourable terms. Take the two days you demand, and then remember, that if you are to live, Macdonnel and I muſt fall!—Name, therefore, the place and hour of rendezvous."

"You recollect the ruined moſque between this place and Eden? there ſhall you find me on Thurſday morning at ſix o'clock."

"Very well; then and there expect to meet us!" and ſo ſaying, he returned to relate the event of his miſſion to Macdonnel and Yelverton, while Rainsford ſat off on his return to Eden; firſt, engaging Captain Stanley as his ſecond on this important occaſion. He reſolved, however, to keep the intended meeting concealed from Mrs. Rainsford, leſt in her anxiety for his life, ſhe might be induced to have recourſe to meaſures for preventing its taking place.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER V.

By Nature cautious as he's brave,
To Honour only he's a slave;
In that weak part, without defence,
We must to Honour make pretence.

CHURCHILL.

THE Colonel proceeded on his way to Eden, abſorbed in aſtoniſhment and reflection, totally unable to account for theſe new charges, which he felt conſcious were altogether as unfounded as the former, and revolving in what way he might moſt effectually prevent any intelligence of the buſineſs reaching Mrs. Rainsford. He ſought, therefore, to aſſume an eaſe and cheerfulneſs of manner ill-according with his real feelings; and to meet his Anna with a ſmile, with the deceitfulneſs of which

which, at the ſame moment, his heart reproached him. But the ſmile he had juſt forced was totally damped at the ſituation in which he found her: She was pale, dejected, evidently ſuffering under the extremeſt anguiſh of mind, but as evidently anxious to keep it in concealment, on which ſhe was reſolved, till ſhe had received an anſwer from Mrs. Meadows.

Alarmed at ſeeing her thus, terrified leſt the tongue of rumour had anticipated his precautions, and at leaſt given her reaſon to ſuſpect the perils by which he was ſurrounded, he earneſtly and affectionately enquired into the cauſe of her dejection. This ſhe imputed to her anxiety on account of his ſummons to Calcutta the evening before, with the occaſion of which ſhe was ſtill unacquainted; and the Colonel, willing to hope that it might originate from this cauſe alone, haſtened to make her eaſy by relating all the circumſtances of the affair. But when he ſpake of his reconciliation with Anneſley, he felt ſo conſcious of its little durability, that he could not avoid a degree of heſitation, which betrayed, that though

though what he had confeſſed was truth, yet it was by no means the whole truth, but that more remained untold. To the haraſſed mind of Mrs. Rainsford, this carried a dreadful conviction that Cecilia's reproaches were not unfounded, and that his embarraſſment aroſe from a conſciouſneſs that his criminality was on the verge of being detected; thus, from different motives, each was reſerved to the other, while both endeavoured to aſſume a maſk of ſincerity.

With ſuch feelings, it was no ſmall relief to them that the Colonel's buſineſs occupied him ſo entirely for the two following days, that they ſaw very little of each other. Rainsford, indeed, dreading nothing ſo much as a farther ſcrutiny from his Anna, into the affair with Anneſley, which he feared ſhe muſt perceive too plainly to have been gloſſed over, avoided her as much as poſſible; while ſhe, revolting from the idea that the man ſhe ſo tenderly loved, of whoſe honour ſhe had conceived ſuch exalted notions, ſhould be ſo fallen, ſo ſunk into acts of the moſt deſpicable villany, ſhrunk within herſelf as he approached her,

and would even have found her mind unſpeakably relieved, could ſhe have been excuſed beholding him again, till all her corroding doubts, on his account, were removed.

To add to her uneaſineſs, ſhe heard not from Mrs. Meadows: She could no way account for her ſilence; but every moment of its continuance was a prolongation of her ſufferings, till at length, wearied out with fruitleſs expectation, ſhe reſolved to go herſelf to Calcutta, and endeavour to ſee her friend; and had, in her own mind, fixed for that purpoſe, on the Thurſday morning on which Colonel Rainsford's rencontre was to take place.

On that morning he left his bed at an early hour, and going into the room where his infant ſon lodged, he tenderly kiſſed and wept over him with unſpeakable anguiſh; and telling the nurſe that he was going out on urgent buſineſs, bid her inform her miſtreſs ſo, and that his return was quite uncertain; poſſibly, he might not be abſent more than two hours, and ſhe might depend on hearing ſhould he be detained much longer.

When this meſſage was delivered, Mrs. Rainsford

Rainsford was almoſt frantic; any doubts ſhe had hitherto retained, now gave place to the ſtrongeſt conviction of his guilt, and the aſſurance that he was gone to anſwer it to Macdonnel. Dreadful as this conviction was, the idea that he and Macdonnel were perhaps at that moment falling by each other's ſwords, was far more horrible, and ſhe reproached herſelf a thouſand and a thouſand times, that ſhe had not more minutely inveſtigated the cauſe of her huſband's reſerve, when ſhe might have prevented the fatal conſequences now likely to enſue.

Scarcely knowing what ſhe was about, ſhe flew to the library, to ſee whether, by means of any papers ſhe might find, ſhe could gain further inſight into this dreadful and myſterious tranſaction. A number of papers were indeed ſcattered on the table; but from none could ſhe gain the leaſt ſatisfaction: She then ſeized the handle of the table-drawer, and pulled with ſuch violence that ſhe burſt open the lock, when the firſt thing ſhe beheld was a letter of Colonel Rainsford's writing, directed

to herſelf.—With frantic eagerneſs ſhe broke the ſeal, and read as follows:

DEAREST, BEST OF WOMEN,

JUDGE of the anguiſh with which I ſit down to write, what, ſhould it ever come into your hands, will be my laſt farewell to one whom my heart has long ſo ardently loved. Yes, deareſt Anna, an awful fate impends over me, and ere twelve hours are paſſed, I may be no more! My ſoul ſhudders in reflecting how that exiſtence, which can never be recalled, may, in one raſh and haſty moment be fooled away; but HONOUR, that idol which our profeſſion, in particular, is taught to worſhip above all things,—HONOUR calls, and I muſt obey!

And yet, wherefore obey?—I know not the offence which I am ſummoned to anſwer, but from my own conjecture, founded on the vague and general charges of my accuſers. It is by Macdonnel that I am called out, who ſtigmatizes me, "as a ſeducer of innocence; a betrayer of the truſt repoſed in me by my friend; a ſcoundrel, devoid of honour myſelf, and

and regardleſs what indignities I put on others." From theſe, and from expreſſions uſed by Captain Anneſley, who was the bearer of the challenge, I muſt ſuppoſe that Macdonnel means to charge me with criminal conduct with our dear Cecilia. But, my Anna, I am guiltleſs of ever harbouring ſuch a thought! Heaven knows I am guiltleſs!—I loved her as a child, or a ſiſter; I wiſhed to ſee her reſpectable as well as faſcinating, and to effect this, my every effort was unweariedly exerted. Oh, could I ever have ſuppoſed it poſſible, that even Slander herſelf could dare ſo baſely to miſrepreſent my conduct, as to impute criminal views to me; or inſinuate that I was actuated by unworthy motives, in my anxiety on her account, when I was wounded to the laſt degree, only becauſe I could not inſpire her with that high ſenſe of honour, which is a woman's *ſureſt*, indeed her *only ſure* guard.

But wherefore urge all this to my Anna? —She knows it well; nor if the calumnies which now blaſt my character have reached her, could lend them one moment's attention:

And that they have reached her I greatly fear; —for Anna, deareſt Anna! whence that dejection but from fear for my life?—And if, my love, I have appeared blameably inattentive to your diſtreſs;—if I have failed to enquire, with my accuſtomed intereſt, into uneaſineſs, the contemplation of which harrowed up my ſoul, believe me, it was not owing to abated tenderneſs, but ſolely to a dread of too much explanation;—to a dread, leſt your anxiety for my ſafety might prompt your interpoſition between me and that phantom which I deſpiſe, while I yield it obedience.—Oh, ſtrange inconſiſtency!—We can reaſon like men; but when we proceed to act, how often, alas! are we in action like children.

My Anna, farewell!—Moſt beloved of women, farewell!—If I muſt fall a ſacrifice to a folly which I have not reſolution to reſiſt, remember, that we have a child, "*as yet, a tender infant*;"—remember what a charge I leave you!—And can I leave you? leave him too?—Let me not think of it leſt I grow a coward!—Or, rather let me think of it till I acquire ſufficient reſolution to reſiſt

hazarding

hazarding a life I have ſo much reaſon to prize!—But no, it muſt not be!—I could ſtand the preſent reproach; but a life of contumely!!!—Oh, my love, my angel, pity while you blame me!

Anna, would that you could read my heart, could know the agonies I ſuffer, while my pen thus lingers on the paper, loath to part from you;—loath to bid you farewell for ever; yet it muſt be: This hand, which I have often thrown in fondneſs round thee, now graſps the dagger that muſt ſtab thee to the heart!—Yet, while it ſtabs with its cruel words, he who guides it is not leſs devotedly than before,

Your fond,

Your affectionate,

EDWARD RAINSFORD.

Mrs. Rainsford read this fatal paper, while, ſtunned with its contents, ſhe wept not, neither did ſhe faint, but, fixed like a ſtatue, remained on the ſpot where ſhe had firſt ſeized it, when the door opening, ſhe was rouſed from her lethargy by beholding the Colonel himſelf enter, into whoſe arms ſhe ſunk ſenſeleſs!

He arrived at the place of rendezvous at the appointed time, where he found his three antagoniſts, who informed him, that after mature deliberation, they thought, conduct ſo baſe as his deſerved not to be puniſhed after the manner of a gentleman; and they had determined, therefore, to proceed on other grounds, and leave the affair to the deciſion of a Court-Martial. In conſequence of this reſolution they had exhibited charges againſt him to the ſuperior officer, on which he would be that day arreſted, and as ſpeedily as poſſible, brought to trial.

To this he replied, that they were certainly at liberty, if they preferred it, to follow this mode of procedure; but they muſt recollect, that as ſoon as he ſhould be acquitted, of which he was confident, it would then be his turn to call on them for ſatisfaction for the opprobrious language with which they had aſſailed him, and they might reſt aſſured that this would not be omitted. They replied, that, in that caſe, they certainly ſhould not ſhrink from meeting him; but adviſed him not to be too ſanguine about the acquittal,

for

for they had not undertaken the proſecution, except their cauſe had reſted on tolerably ſecure ground; and with that reply they departed. Rainsford immediately returned home, rejoiced that he had no farther neceſſity for practiſing reſerve to his Anna; and enquiring for her, was told ſhe was in the library, whither he flew with tranſports;—though theſe experienced a cruel alloy from the affecting manner in which he was received.

It was not long, however, before Mrs. Rainsford recovered her ſenſes, when ſhe and the Colonel gave free ſcope to the unbounded happineſs they felt at being thus reſtored to mutual confidence. But though this haraſſing reſerve was at an end, other trials awaited them:—The requiſite explanations on both ſides were ſcarcely concluded, when the arrival of the guard, which was to take Rainsford into cuſtody, was announced, and with them he was obliged inſtantly to depart, after tenderly bidding adieu to his wife and child. The former of theſe, it was agreed, ſhould follow him to Calcutta, to endeavour at ac-

quiring ſome farther inſight into an affair ſtill utterly incomprehenſible to either.—Eloiſa ſays,

> HEAVEN first taught LETTERS for some wretch's aid,
> Some banish'd lover, or some captive maid!

But as Rainsford was carried guarded to Calcutta, and revolved in his mind all that his poor friend, Charles Meadows, had ſuffered in conſequence of a LETTER, and the proſpects before himſelf, in conſequence of another, he was rather tempted to think them the invention of ſome EVIL GENIUS for the curſe of mankind!

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER VI.

There, at one passage, oft you might survey
A lie and truth contending for the way;
And long 'twas doubtful, both so closely pent,
Which first should issue through the narrow vent:
At last agreed, together out they fly,
Inseparable now the truth and lie;
The strict companions are for ever join'd,
And this, or that, unmix'd, no mortal e'er shall find.

POPE.

TO return again to Zelinda:—When she had somewhat recovered from the consternation and horror with which she was struck at the perusal of Cecilia's letter, and her husband's hasty departure after she had communicated it to him, she began to reflect by what means it could have come into her house. Then she immediately recollected that Colonel Rainsford might very probably have been there during her absence, and dropped it from

his pocket; nor did ſhe now doubt but that this moſt baſe and criminal tranſaction had come to Mrs. Rainsford's knowledge, and was the occaſion of her uneaſineſs; a cauſe fully adequate to the effect ſhe had witneſſed. She found alſo in Cecilia's mortified diſappointed paſſion, an equally efficient cauſe for her phrenzy, and the wild expreſſions ſhe had uſed with reſpect to Colonel Rainsford. There remained now, therefore, no reaſon for her viſit to Mrs. Meadows, and, accordingly, when Shepherd came in, a few minutes after, to announce her carriage, it was remanded.

Left thus at liberty to purſue his meditations, Shepherd retired to his own room, when feeling in his pocket for the letters, the cover to Mrs. Meadows only was to be found. He looked about the room, no trace of the other was to be diſcovered, he went over the houſe, and to every place where he could recollect that he had been ſince his firſt reading it,—ſtill it eluded his ſearch. He inwardly raved and curſed himſelf, but all to no purpoſe, the letter was gone paſt redemption; and ſhortly after, over-hearing ſome violent expreſſions dropped

dropped by Captain Anneſley, as he and Yelverton came into the houſe together, no doubt remained on his mind but that it had fallen into their hands.

What then was left for him?—To eſcape detection was impoſſible, for of courſe Mrs. Rainsford, not receiving an anſwer from Mrs. Meadows, would enquire into this delay, and it muſt then appear that the packet had never been delivered; and the encloſed letter to Cecilia having become public, the proceſs by which it came to light muſt inevitably be traced. No alternative but a haſty retreat therefore remained, and on this he reſolved. But as he did not chuſe to make it without his ſalary, he went directly to Yelverton with a ſtory that he had been ſent for by a friend up the country, who could procure him a poſt of conſiderable profit, if he would ſet off without delay, and requeſting therefore his immediate diſmiſſion. Yelverton, after ſwearing heartily at the man for troubling him at ſuch a moment, paid his wages, and before night he was ſeveral miles diſtant from Calcutta.

Hitherto Yelverton had been too much abſorbed

ſorbed in the letter itſelf to think of inveſtigating how it came into Zelinda's hands; but towards evening, growing ſomewhat cooler on the ſubject, he recollected that he was yet ignorant of that matter, and enquired into it. Zelinda thereupon imparted all ſhe knew about it, and her own conjecture that it muſt have been dropped by Rainsford. But Rainsford had not been into the houſe, and this conjecture was therefore entirely done away; nor could either ſhe or the Captain form any other which could plauſibly account for the manner in which it was found, till it was ſolved at a viſit made ſome days after by Mrs. Rainsford to Mrs. Yelverton, on the morning of the Colonel's arreſt.

On that day Mrs. Rainsford arrived at Calcutta within a very ſhort time after her huſband, when ſhe went immediately to Mrs. Meadows's, anxious to know the fate of her letter, which ſhe had little doubt had by ſome means fallen into Macdonnel's hands, and occaſioned the preſent troubles in which the Colonel was involved. She found Mrs. Meadows in a ſcarcely leſs embarraſſing ſituation than

than her own, through her old perſecutor Dawkins, (of which we ſhall ſpeak in the next Chapter) but totally ignorant of the letter in queſtion, and only knowing by vague rumour that ſome heavy accuſations had been brought againſt Colonel Rainsford. With theſe reports however ſhe had not concerned herſelf, as ſhe concluded them to ariſe from what had paſſed between him and Captain Anneſley, which affair ſhe knew had been happily ſettled. She was ſhocked indeed at finding how much ſhe was miſtaken in her conjectures, and the very diſagreeable predicament in which her friends now ſtood.

When Mrs. Rainsford learnt that her letter had never been delivered to Mrs. Meadows, her ſuſpicions of courſe fell on the ſervant to whom it had been entruſted, and ſhe haſtened to Mrs. Yelverton to try what farther intelligence was to be obtained. Here, on comparing circumſtances together, no doubt of Shepherd's treachery remained on the minds of either of the ladies, indeed his haſty departure ſeemed a full confeſſion of guilt. Still Cecilia's writing ſuch a letter appeared as great a myſtery

a myſtery as ever to Mrs. Rainsford, and ſhe declared her intention of going to her immediately and ſatisfying herſelf whether it were really written by her, or whether the whole were not the machination of ſome villain, eager to deſtroy the happineſs of both families.

"Alas, then," ſaid Mrs. Yelverton, "you do not know of poor Cecilia's ſituation?"

"What mean you, Zelinda?" ſaid Mrs. Rainsford, alarmed. "No, I have heard nothing of her ſince her rude diſmiſſal of our meſſenger on Saturday."

"You will be ſhocked then at what you ſhall hear," anſwered Zelinda. She now gave Mrs. Rainsford an ample detail of all that had ſince occurred, concluding her relation with ſaying, "I underſtand Mrs. Macdonnel ſtill to continue in the ſame ſtate of outrageous phrenzy as when I laſt ſaw her; but ever ſince the fatal diſcovery of the letter, I am prohibited by Captain Yelverton from going to the houſe."

"Ah then," ſaid Mrs. Rainsford, "I ſee the whole matter but too plainly. This letter was written in a tranſport of phrenzy, when

when our poor young friend knew not what ſhe was about.—Oh how ſhall I eternally reproach myſelf, that I did not ſhew it without heſitation to the Colonel—that I could wrong him ſo much as to admit for a moment the idea that ſuch a man could be a villain. But why, Zelinda, was I not informed of theſe particulars?"

"I went to Eden, my dear Madam, on Monday morning, for the purpoſe of communicating them, but finding you already ſo uneaſy, I did not care to add to your diſtreſs by ſuch a diſcloſure. It was not long after my return home on that day that Cecilia's letter fell into my hands, with the conſequences of which you are but too well acquainted."

"Ah that you had but made your deſigned communication!—for then, knowing Cecilia's ſtate, her letter had been accounted for, and all had been well. What do not mankind often ſuffer from ſuch miſtaken reſerve, ſuch miſtaken ideas of tenderneſs and delicacy!—we have, amongſt us, been playing theſe off to each other, till we have thereby involved ourſelves in a maze of perplexities, from which

I ſee

I ſee not any immediate proſpect of our extrication.—And what could you mean, Zelinda, by the queſtions you put to me that morning?"

"Oh heaven, I hardly knew myſelf!—I wiſhed to ſay ſomething, yet knew not what to ſay.—Indeed I have now ſcarcely any recollection of the ſubject of thoſe queſtions, but I am afraid they were very filly, very trifling."

Little more paſſed on this ſubject, and the time being nearly expired when Mrs. Rainsford had been told that ſhe might poſſibly be allowed to ſee the Colonel, ſhe went in ſearch of him, in order to impart the intelligence ſhe had been collecting.

She had not left Mrs. Yelverton many minutes when the Captain entered, attended by Anneſley and Macdonnel. He wore a very ſtern and angry countenance, and with a voice but too much correſponding with it, addreſſed his wife, "Zelinda, has Mrs. Rainsford been with you?"

"Yes, ſhe has."

"Then, take notice, from this moment I inſiſt

inſiſt that ſhe never be admitted within my doors again; ſhe is as bad, or even worſe, than her huſband."

"Indeed, my love, I fear you are deceived as to both; I fear they are groſsly miſrepreſented, and you will find them at laſt to be innocent."

"*Innocent!* yes, they are pretty *innocents* indeed! but I do not deſire ſuch *innocents* for companions to my wife! Thank God ſhe eſcaped uninjured, though living for ſome time under the ſame roof with this *innocent* Colonel, and ſhe ſhall not run any more riſks."

"What do you mean, my dear George? —I am ſure I always found Colonel Rainsford's behaviour marked with the moſt perfect propriety, and, as you know, he has been to me one of the kindeſt, beſt of friends."

"Oh, yes to be ſure,—and he has been one of the *kindeſt*, *beſt* of friends to Mrs. Macdonnel too—vaſtly kind, vaſtly fond, I don't doubt;—damn him, ſuch a ſcene has come out; a ſervant of his has offered to be evidence againſt him, and a pretty ſtory he has to tell truly."

"Good

"Good Heavens!—what can it be?"

"Oh, a trifling buſineſs!—the wife was very kind in accommodating the huſband, that's all; leaving the lovers together whenever ſhe had an opportunity; and no doubt the huſband has been equally accommodating to the wife, only that we don't happen to know quite ſo much about the matter; *her* gallant has not been ſeized with ſuch a jealous fit as *his* miſtreſs, and ſo that ſecret is better kept."

"And curſe me, if I would not have had the wife out of revenge," ſaid Macdonnel, "if I had known as much then as I do now!"

"Why, you cannot ſurely mean to inſinuate that Mrs. Rainsford has been criminal?"

"Criminal enough; ſhe has been pimp to her huſband at leaſt, if ſhe has not been a proſtitute herſelf; for ſhe uſed to leave Cecilia and him together, under pretence of his lecturing her for her levity towards other men; and one time, when ſhe had done ſo, this ſervant, who was not known by the lovers to be ſo near at hand, overheard ſome very *tender* expreſſions,

preſſions, ſuch as, "My deareſt Cecilia!—my lovely girl!"—and others equally ſoft and inſinuating; and then he *tenderly* claſped the lady in his arms, and gave her a very *tender* kiſs or two. God knows how much farther this *tender* ſcene might have been carried, had it not been that the man made ſome accidental noiſe, which he thinks they heard, and ſuppoſing themſelves interrupted, the tone was ſuddenly changed, and it was all ſage, parental, and moral advice on the one ſide, and promiſes of prudence and good behaviour on the other."

"Damn the hypocrite!" here exclaimed the enraged Macdonnel.—damn him! damn him! damn him! but he ſhall pay dear enough for theſe *tender* moments!"

Mrs. Yelverton was perfectly aſtoniſhed!—unwilling as ſhe was to believe Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford as culpable as they were repreſented, there were yet circumſtances here brought forward, enough to confound the moſt incredulous, eſpecially as the ſtory, told by the ſervant, agreed ſo well with what Cecilia ſaid in her letter. The truth was, that the man

man had ſome foundation for his aſſertions, but had wonderfully embelliſhed his relation. The reader will perhaps recollect, that when Colonel Rainsford, after ſeveral remonſtrances with Cecilia, on her conduct towards Morriſon, had at laſt brought her to a ſenſe and acknowledgment of its impropriety, and a promiſe of amendment, in his tranſport at the proſpect of this alteration, he did actually give her a kiſs. It was a pure effuſion of friendſhip, given with the moſt perfect innocence of heart; but was thus converted into a heavy accuſation againſt him, ſo true is it that the guilt or innocence of a thouſand trifling circumſtances is eſtabliſhed, not ſo much by the act itſelf, as by the manner in which it may be repreſented; and when once the world has begun to traduce the character of any victim it has ſelected, there is no circumſtance too abſurd or improbable for one ſet of perſons to relate, or another to believe.

Mrs. Rainsford, as we have ſaid, quitted Mrs. Yelverton, with the hope that ſhe might then gain admittance to the Colonel; but how ſevere was her mortification, when, on arriving

riving at the door of the hall where he had been examined, ſhe was informed that he was ordered into the cloſeſt confinement, and on no conſideration was any perſon to be allowed acceſs to him: A moſt unuſual and unlooked-for ſeverity, as it was expected that he would be left at large on his parole, according to the general cuſtom in ſimilar caſes. But ſuch exceſſive pains had been taken by his proſecutors to traduce his character, and influence the public mind to their own ſide, that the ſame Colonel Rainsford, who, but a few days before, had been half idolized in Calcutta, was now regarded as ſo great a villain that his word was not to be truſted.

This was a ſtroke almoſt beyond Mrs. Rainsford's fortitude to bear. It was now plain, that her huſband was pre-judged, and that innocence could be of little avail to ſtem the torrent of calumny let looſe to overwhelm him. And yet, amidſt all theſe indignities, ſome powerful conſolations remained, to which both herſelf and the Colonel could ſafely cling for ſupport. In the firſt place, his life could not be touched; and if deprived of honours

which

which he had *accepted*, not *ſought*, he could enjoy a private life, with the fulleſt conſciouſneſs that this perſecution had been wholly undeſerved. An opportunity was, moreover, now afforded of diſtinguiſhing his real friends, from thoſe who were only the adherents of his ſtation and fortune; and he had the ſatisfaction of finding a choſen few, whoſe attachment remained unſhaken, and who, ſpite of his calumniators, could perſiſt in believing him an innocent and injured man.

At the head of theſe was the truly benevolent Benington, who, owing to his retired habits, had declined many preſſing invitations to Eden, and with whom Rainsford had conſequently had very little intercourſe ſince his ſettling there. But the moment the merchant heard of his embarraſſments, he became anxious to render him any ſervice in his power, and with this view attended at his examination. Here, though he thought the charges preſſed hard upon him, and had the appearance of being well ſupported, yet ſo firm was his reliance on that honour and integrity of which he had ſeen ſuch repeated inſtances, that he

perſiſted

perſiſted in believing the Colonel's character would finally be cleared, and that he ſhould yet behold him reſtored to the high place he had once held in the public eſteem. In this opinion he was the more fully confirmed, from the perfect tranquillity maintained by the ſuppoſed culprit during the whole of this trying ſcene; a tranquillity which bore not the leaſt appearance of being aſſumed as a maſk to conceal conſcious guilt, but evidently aroſe from the conſcious dignity of calumniated worth.

When, therefore, he heard him commanded into ſtrict cuſtody, he made every poſſible effort to procure an abatement of the rigour of this order, and obtain permiſſion that he might be confined at his (Mr. Benington's) houſe, offering to take any guard with him that the Court might judge proper to appoint. But even this indulgence, ſmall as it was, was peremptorily refuſed, and the merchant had the mortification of ſeeing his friend borne off to his place of confinement, without any means of alleviating its hardſhips.

Nor leſs aſſiduous was Captain Stanley in

endeavouring to aſſiſt a man he ſo highly eſteemed, by boldly remonſtrating againſt the unprecedented ſeverity of his treatment, and even threatening to appeal to the Governor-General againſt the conduct of the Court; but his menaces, and Benington's entreaties, were alike waſted in air. The Colonel's confinement was, however, of no long continuance; he was ſoon brought to trial, and the event was exactly what, under ſuch circumſtances, might be expected; he was pronounced guilty, and ſentenced to be deprived of all his honours, and declared incapable of ſerving the company more.

This ſentence, with the minutes of the proceedings of the Court, was immediately forwarded to the Governor-General for his confirmation; but he was ſo much ſtruck with the caſe, and thought the evidence againſt the Colonel ſo inadequate for his conviction, eſpecially when weighed againſt his general high character, that he refuſed to ſanction the ſentence, and referred the whole affair to the deciſion of the Court of Directors in England, forwarding immediately by a Courier, over land,

land, all the documents neceſſary for enabling them to form their judgment. At the ſame time he ſent an order to Calcutta for the Colonel to be releaſed on his parole, accompanying it with a pretty ſevere cenſure on the unneceſſary and unuſual rigour with which he had hitherto been confined.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER VII.

So spake the Cherub, and his grave rebuke,
Severe in youthful beauty, added grace
Invincible; abash'd the Devil stood,
And felt how awful goodness is, and saw
Virtue in her shape how lovely.

MILTON.

WHEN Mrs. Meadows returned to Calcutta, after the *accouchement* of Mrs. Rainsford, ſhe was, for a ſhort time, entirely free from Dawkins's intruſions, and indeed had reaſon to believe that he had quitted the place, whither ſhe earneſtly hoped he might not return, before her departure to England, an event which was now drawing near, and to which ſhe looked forward with the greateſt ſatisfaction. But ere that time arrived, her tormentor again appeared, and renewed his fulſome

fulſome aſſiduities with increaſed ardour, making numberleſs excuſes for viſiting her, and following her whitherſoever ſhe went. All this was extremely irkſome; yet while he never ſpake of his paſſion, or behaved improperly in any way, ſhe felt it difficult abſolutely to forbid his coming to the houſe.

But on the morning after ſhe had laſt ſeen Colonel Rainsford, at a very early hour, juſt as

'Twas ebbing darkness, past the noon of night,
And Phospher, on the confines of the light,
Promis'd the Sun, ere day began to spring,
The tuneful lark already stretch'd her wing,
And flick'ring on her nest, made short essays to sing.

DRYDEN.

She was awakened by a violent knocking at her door, and the ſervant entering her room in a few minutes, brought a note, the bearer of which, ſhe ſaid, was ordered to wait, and in caſe Mrs. Meadows would accompany him, to conduct her to the gentleman by whom it was ſent. Amelia haſtily opened it, and read as follows:

"Excuſe, dear Madam, this unſeaſonable ſummons; but I earneſtly wiſh you would accompany the bearer to the houſe where I am at preſent, whither I have been ſent for to attend the death-bed of the Derviſe, Jeipal, who is extremely anxious to ſee you before he expires; and who, I think, cannot ſurvive another hour, otherwiſe I had not troubled you till the day had been farther advanced.

Your's with reſpect,

EDWARD RAINSFORD.

Mrs. Meadows dreſſed herſelf in haſte, unſuſpicious of any fraud, and anxious only to learn, as ſhe expected, ſomething farther relative to the fate of her unfortunate Charles. She accompanied the meſſenger to a houſe quite at the extremity of the town, when he conducted her up ſtairs, and ſhewing her into a room, ſaid, he would tell the gentleman ſhe was come. The day was by this time ſufficiently dawned for her to ſee what ſort of place ſhe was in, and ſhe was ſomewhat ſurprized to find it a room furniſhed in a ſtyle of great elegance, on which ſhe immediately concluded,

concluded, that Jeipal had been ſent for to ſome perſon of conſequence, who wanted his medical aſſiſtance, and had there been taken ill.

She ſat down on a ſofa—every moment appearing to her an age, till ſhe ſhould be conducted to the dying man; but ſhe had not been ſeated two minutes, ere ſhe heard the door open, and looking up, beheld entering, the form of all others, in ſuch a ſituation, moſt terrifying to her, that of Dawkins. She gave a violent ſcream, and ruſhing towards the door, endeavoured to paſs him, and haſten out of the room; but he cooly turned round, and locking the door, ſaid, "Be not alarmed, Madam, I know the ſight of me is unexpected by you; but I aſſure you, that at preſent, converſation is all I ſeek; and it is only your refuſal to liſten to me which will drive me to extremities. For private reaſons I fixed on this place, and hour, for an interview; and as I knew that I had no chance of obtaining one if requeſted in my own perſon, I availed myſelf of a more favoured name to attract you hither!"

"And do you think that this baſe artifice ſhall avail you?—No, Mr. Dawkins, feeble as my ſex is eſteemed, you ſhall ſee that a woman, when her ſpirit is once rouſed, has powers of reſiſtance, of which you may not, perhaps, dream; nor will I ſtay one moment to liſten to your inſulting language:"—And again ſhe attempted to get to the door, but he took hold of her hands, and ſaid,

"Can you ſuppoſe, Mrs. Meadows, when I planned this interview, that I did not take care to preclude every poſſibility of your eſcaping?—But once more, I aſſure you, that it is only converſation I ſeek; why will you not liſten to me, then, but drive me to an attempt which I by no means wiſh?—Why will you not ſit down and hear what I have to ſay?"

Half wild with terror, not knowing how to extricate herſelf from her ſituation, and fearful to drive him to deſperation, Amelia thought ſhe had better liſten to him quietly for a while; and ſhe ſaid, "Well, then, keep your diſtance, and I will attend."

"At any diſtance you pleaſe, Madam:"—

She

She ſat down on a chair, juſt by the door, and he on another, at the other ſide of the room, when he began:—"It is now many years, Mrs. Meadows, that I have cheriſhed, with unabated ardour, my unfortunate paſſion for you; nor can you form any idea of the dangers I have braved, and the difficulties I have encountered in this long purſuit; they can be known only to myſelf, and to a power capable of ſeeing far deeper than mortal powers can penetrate. But, with ſuch a prize in view, who would not encounter difficulties?—The joys of Heaven were to me a diſtant and barren proſpect; I beheld you, and my heart was fixed on the joys of earth. Yet ah, man little knows on what a wretched foundation he builds his hopes of happineſs, when woman is to be its baſis!—Pure paſſion is an idea to which the female heart is a ſtranger; nor knows it how to value love for itſelf alone. Yes, Mrs. Meadows, even you, whom I have wiſhed to conſider as ſuperior to the reſt of your ſex, even you have but more confirmed me in the belief of this truth;—for what was your conduct towards a huſband,

whom you profeſſed to love with an ardour that knew no bounds, which no time could abate, no chance could alter?—And yet, while to this man you could give your hand, you could refuſe him the only reward that could ſatisfy love like his:—"*You put a barren ſceptre in his gripe*;" but denied all that could make that ſceptre valuable."

"Merciful God!" exclaimed Amelia, ſtarting up, "why muſt I be doomed to liſten to ſuch language?—Let me go, Sir, this inſtant, or I will alarm the neighbourhood with my cries!"

"That you cannot do, Madam; only bear in mind, therefore, what I told you; be quiet and you are ſafe; attempt to make a noiſe, and you compel me to violence!"

Amelia gave him a look of the fierceſt indignation!—She walked up and down the room, with her arms folded, while he continued,—"Had I ſeen your heart devoted to love alone, that the man was your ſole object, revering ſo pure, ſo elevated a paſſion, I had inſtantly dropped my purſuit, what pangs ſoever it might have coſt me; nay, even when

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that lover was no more, I had conſidered your love and ſorrow ſtill as ſacred, nor dared to intrude upon them. But when I found that this man was only dear, in proportion to the means he might have of fixing you ſplendidly in the world; that love alone was not your object, but that you equally ſought "*fame, wealth, and honour,*" no barrier appeared againſt purſuing my claim with a diligence equal to my rival's. Still I have found you inexorable! but it is time, Mrs. Meadows, that this farce ſhould be concluded, the maſk you have ſo long worn is now grown old, the varniſh has loſt its gloſs, it can deceive no longer; throw it aſide then, finiſh with a marriage in due form, and let the curtain drop on the ridiculous ſcene; behold me ready to plight my faith to you;—you have been a widow as long as reputation requires, then accept the hand I offer, and we may both be happy."

"Go on, go on," ſaid Amelia, ſtill walking about the room, "let me hear all you have to ſay at once; yet do not hope at laſt to frighten me into compliance, nor ſup-

poſe that when all my happineſs on earth has been ſacrificed to my unfortunate paſſion, any thing that your brutality can utter can make the ſmalleſt alteration in my ſentiments."

"Oh falſe ideas of an ill-judging world, which can aſſert that the female heart is incapable of firmneſs! Can nothing then move you, Madam? Can you ſtill dare to defy me? Oh, how little could I once ſuppoſe that I ſhould be driven again to theſe ſchemes of terror! I thought that when I had ſoftened your ſoul towards me by my late conduct, when I had averted an evil which threatened you, and which I only could avert, that gratitude at leaſt would have accompliſhed what I wiſhed to owe to warmer feelings;—and if, inſenſible to the torments you ſaw me endure from ungratified paſſion, pity could not ſway your boſom to allay them, the ſhame of not rewarding ſo important a ſervice, with the only recompenſe which you knew I could prize, would at leaſt have had ſome influence in my favour."

"And, ſince you failed in that hope, you would

would endeavour now to win me, by expoſing to my view how much I have been duped, how you have ſported with my unſuſpicious temper, and fooled me into believing you ſincere, when moſt I ought to have ſuſpected falſehood."

"No, Madam, you miſtake my preſent aim; I reſolved to get you completely in my power, and I have done it. I ſaw that you could ſacrifice wealth, to pride and an oſtentatious diſplay of ſentiment and ſenſibility, and, ſince you were not vulnerable in that part, I have now taken ſurer ground. Know then that your character is proſtrate at my feet, and, if you wiſh to preſerve that unblemiſhed, you muſt conſent to be mine. The houſe you are now in, is one of the moſt notorious for ill-fame which this city contains; ſwear to give me your hand on any day you ſhall chooſe to appoint, within the next fortnight, and I will this moment conduct you out of it, by a ſecret way, ſo that no one ſhall know whence you come: Refuſe what I aſk, you muſt then quit the houſe in the face of day,

day, and of thouſands of ſpectators, and you know the conſequence."

"Nor do I care for the conſequence, I dread no evil but a guilty conſcience."

"Good God! good God!—but are you well aware what you ſay, Madam? You may ſuppoſe the loſs of character to be a trifle, but conſider the train of ills it brings with it, the loſs of your ſtation in ſociety, perpetual reproach, every eye looking on you with ſcorn, no friend to relieve your ſufferings,—are theſe nothing? And, mark me, Madam, I will take care that change of place ſhall not avail you; this ſtigma, once fixed on your reputation, ſhall never be removed, it ſhall hunt you through every quarter of the globe, till at laſt you ſhall be compelled to *ſeek* ſhelter in my arms. You may doubt my ability to execute theſe threats, but take care how you rely on ſo fallacious a hope; what I am determined on, I am determined on at all hazards, nor care I if I even fall myſelf, in ſealing your inevitable ruin. Your child too, your Indamora, ſhall ſhare your fate, ſhall be

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the victim of crimes which ſhe yet hardly knows even by name."

"Mr. Dawkins, unlock the door this inſtant and give me paſſage; I will not ſtay another moment to be thus inſulted.—You may think me perhaps, as a woman, unable to compel you to what I demand,—but know that the female arm, nerved by energy of mind, has powers of which the ſlaves of vice can form no idea, and will be obeyed." As ſhe ſpoke, the lightning which flaſhed from her eyes, the bright effulgence of determined virtue, like Zephon's reproof, abaſhed the devil with whom ſhe contended;—he felt himſelf again foiled; he ſcarcely dared to look on her, he pauſed for a moment; deteſtable thoughts were floating in his brain, but cunning once more gained the aſcendancy; his point was carried, why then by brutal violence undo what art had been accompliſhing?—He drew forth the key and unlocked the door, Mrs. Meadows haſtened out of the houſe, he following her, nor did either ſtop till ſhe arrived at her own door.

While

While the ſcene was paſſing, Amelia felt her ſituation inſpiring her with reſolution, nor could any ſenſation find a place in her breaſt except anxiety for her deliverance; but as ſhe threw herſelf into a chair in her own room, the mingled emotions which ruſhed all at once on her mind, could find no relief but by burſting into a torrent of tears. When theſe were ſomewhat ſubſided, ſhe began to conſider what was to be done in circumſtances ſo new and ſtrange, and the firſt ſtep ſhe took was to ſend for her old friend and counſellor Mr. Benington, to whom ſhe communicated what had paſſed, and aſked his advice how to proceed.

But the reſult of the conference was, that nothing could be done. Amelia had gone voluntarily to the houſe, and if ſhe was forcibly detained there and threatened, of this ſhe had no evidence to produce, neither could ſhe prove the note which enticed her thither a forgery. The only thing therefore left, was to abide the conſequences of this treachery, which proved exactly what Dawkins intended; that being ſeen to come out of ſo noted an houſe,

houſe, at that early hour, followed by him, it was immediately concluded they had not been there for any good purpoſe, and Mrs. Meadows was accordingly conſidered as a woman ſo entirely abandoned, that ſhe had not even decency ſufficient to attempt preſerving an outward appearance of character.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER VIII.

Amis, le temps nous presse,
Ménageons les momens que ce transport nous laisse,
Sauvons-le. Nos efforts deviendroient impuissans,
S'il reprenoit ici, sa rage avec ses sens.

RACINE.

DURING all the time that Colonel Rainsford's affair had been impending, Cecilia had remained in a ſtate of inſanity, in her raving fits conſtantly uttering incoherent expreſſions relative to a letter, which, though too unconnected fully to explain the cauſe of her diſorder, ſufficiently ſhewed that a letter had a ſtrong reference to it, and gave great additional weight to the ſuſpicions that rage, not truth, had dictated what ſhe had written.

One day, when ſhe was rather more compoſed than uſual, on her phyſician's entering the

the room, ſhe addreſſed him as a prieſt who was come to confeſs her, and told him that ſhe was glad to ſee him, for her mind would be more at eaſe when ſhe had unburthened it to one of his holy function. She begged to be left alone with him, to which he, willing to humour her, conſented, and ordered all the other attendants to leave the room; when ſhe told him that ſhe had murdered her huſband and Colonel Rainsford, and wiſhed he would ſend for the proper officers to take her into cuſtody, for ſhe ſhould never be eaſy till ſhe had ſurrendered herſelf to juſtice.

"And how was it that you killed them, Madam?"

"How!—ay—I muſt conſider—my poor unſettled brain—my recollection is bad—no, I don't think I killed them myſelf."

"Who then killed them?"

"Why it was I—I ſent them out to fight—and I am ſure they are both dead—for—I'll tell you a ſecret—lean your head this way—I often ſee their ghoſts—but I dare not ſhriek for fear of betraying myſelf."

"I think

"I think you are miſtaken—I think I ſaw them both alive yeſterday."

"Ay, but it was this morning they fought—only this morning—no, no—I'm ſure they're dead—Ha!—there they are!—look at them—and now they grin at me—and now they point to that grave, and tell me I muſt come there to them.—Ha!—they bleed—they are going to fight again.—Oh ſave me, ſave me, ſave me from the fight!" and ſhe threw herſelf down with her face on the bed in a convulſive agony.

The phyſician did not endeavour to interrupt her. She lay for ſome minutes, then raiſing her head again, and looking around her, "Ah," ſhe cried, "they are gone.—Oh would that I could ſee Mrs. Rainsford, ſhe is kind and gentle, and I have many things to ſay to her before I go."

"Whither are you going then?"

"Blockhead, to hell, where ſhe will never come, and ſo I ſhall never, never, ſee her more!—but, wretch that I am, ſhe cannot come near me."

"Perhaps ſhe would were I to entreat her."

"You

"You entreat! who are you then?—Oh that I could but ſee her!"

"You ſhall ſee her, indeed you ſhall."

"But not in her mourning weeds, I cannot bear that."

"No, in her uſual garb."

"Indeed!—and will ſhe come?—Go then, haſte and bring her—ſhe will do me more good than all the prieſts—ay and all the phyſicians too.—Go run—pray go—I am quite impatient.—Oh that I may but ſee her!"

Perceiving her thus intent on ſeeing Mrs. Rainsford, he recalled the attendants, and went away, revolving in his mind how this interview could be accomplished, which he had no doubt would eſſentially contribute to the reſtoration of his patient. The difficulty was to get ſuch an application made to that lady, for, as things were circumſtanced, it ſeemed no ſmall favour to aſk her to come to the unfortunate Cecilia, eſpecially as all thoſe by whom ſuch a requeſt would have been made with the greateſt propriety, had now ſo entirely eſtranged themſelves from the poor lunatic, that their interference in her behalf could not be aſked.

aſked. Macdonnel, in the firſt effuſion of indignation at his wife's ſuppoſed diſhonour, had vehemently ſworn that he never would ſee her again; an oath to which, contrary to his uſual practice with regard to oaths, he had hitherto moſt religiouſly adhered. Mrs. Yelverton had been forbidden by her huſband to ſee Cecilia, whom he called an abandoned proſtitute; and Captain Anneſley, after the extreme zeal he had ſhewn to bring Rainsford to juſtice, thought that he had done all which his relationſhip to Mrs. Macdonnel required; and as he heard that ſhe was *crazy*, he thought ſhe was better left to herſelf. Beſides, his leave of abſence from his regiment was nearly expired, and he muſt rejoin it;—this he accordingly did, perfectly ſatisfied with his own conduct, and remained there eaſy and contented, ſometimes indeed expreſſing a wiſh that he could hear of his poor niece, but never taking any ſteps to procure himſelf that gratification.

Such being the ſituation of the perſons moſt nearly connected with Cecilia, the phyſician could ſee no other reſource than that he ſhould;

himſelf

himſelf make the application to Mrs. Rainsford, which, though an entire ſtranger, he reſolved to do without delay. He was one, indeed, who had ſo much of "*the milk of human kindneſs*" about his heart, that he ardently wiſhed to do every thing in his power for the reſtoration of his patient, even though it might not fall regularly within his province, in his profeſſional capacity. He was, moreover, gratified by ſuch an opportunity of commencing an acquaintance with a lady, of whom he had conceived a very high opinion, from the general character ſhe had preſerved; a character not at all leſſened in his eſtimation by the late tranſactions, ſince, to him, it appeared obviouſly much more probable, that the whole affair originated either in the malicious machinations of ſome enemies of the Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford, or from unfortunate miſrepreſentations, than that perſons, whoſe conduct had long been ſo exemplary, ſhould, on a ſudden, without any adequate motive, plunge themſelves into the loweſt depths of infamy. This opinion was, indeed, ſtrengthened by what he could collect amidſt the

the wanderings of Cecilia's mind, which ſhewed plainly that it was labouring under the preſſure of a conſciouſneſs of having herſelf injured, not being injured by, theſe her trueſt friends.

The doctor found no difficulty in obtaining his petition: Indeed, had Mrs. Rainsford known exactly how Cecilia was circumſtanced, ſhe had not waited for any ſolicitation; but ſuppoſing her ſtill living with Macdonnel, ſhe conſidered any idea, on her part, of gaining admiſſion to her, as quite out of the queſtion. Deeply affected, therefore, with the doctor's relation, and ſhocked to think of the deſerted ſtate of one, who but ſo ſhort a time back, was the object of almoſt univerſal homage, ſhe haſtened to her without delay, and was preſented with a moſt heart-diſſolving yet intereſting ſpectacle. The violent ravings which had once diſtorted her features, had now ſubſided, and ſhe had only ſo much remains of phrenzy in her countenance, as to give additional expreſſion to her always animated eyes, while the fever had ſuffuſed her cheeks with tints more lovely than

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the imagination of a painter ever formed, and her diſhevelled hair, hanging in looſe ringlets about her face and ſhoulders, completed the affecting wildneſs of the whole figure.

When Mrs. Rainsford entered, ſhe was lying on the bed, and the nurſe ſitting on the chair by her, whom the phyſician addreſſed, to know if his patient were aſleep. The ſound of his well-known voice made Cecilia look up, when the firſt object on which ſhe fixed her eyes, was Mrs. Rainsford, whom, having ſurveyed earneſtly for a few minutes, ſhe turned to the phyſician and laughed. She then roſe from the bed, looked for ſome time alternately on Mrs. Rainsford and the doctor, as if ſomething were paſſing in her mind, though ſhe knew not well what, when the former approaching her, ſhe ſhrunk back, and laying down on the bed again, turned away and cloſed her eyes.

In a ſhort time after, at the phyſician's requeſt, Mrs. Rainsford withdrew. She had not been abſent long, before Cecilia raiſed her head again, and looked round and round the room as if miſſing ſomething, and immediately be-

gan talking, as uſual, about Mrs. Rainsford and a letter, and twice murmured ſomething within herſelf about the devil's pen and ink.

The next day Mrs. Rainsford went to her again, and found her ſitting in an eaſy chair: —On hearing the room-door open, Cecilia turned her head round, and on ſeeing who came in, laughed exceedingly. Mrs. Rainsford ſat down by her, and took hold of her hand;—ſhe did not ſeem either wholly ſenſible, or wholly inſenſible, to what was done, but ſurveyed her viſitor from head to foot ſeveral times, yet without uttering a word, during the whole of her ſtay, which was near half an hour. When Mrs. Rainsford was gone, however, ſhe appeared uneaſy, and walked about the room as looking for ſomething ſhe had loſt.

Mrs. Rainsford repeated theſe viſits for ſeveral days ſucceſſively, and met with much the ſame reception; but each time the nurſe and phyſician obſerved, that after her departure, Cecilia ſeemed more and more uneaſy than the preceding. After ſome time, they wiſhed to try the effect of Mrs. Rainsford's

ford's omitting her viſit, and accordingly ſhe went not to her the whole day. The conſequence was, that about the time when Cecilia had been accuſtomed to ſee her, ſhe began looking repeatedly towards the door, and finding ſhe did not come, roſe up and walked about the room in a hurried manner, and at laſt went to the door, and endeavoured to open it, but in this ſhe was prevented by the phyſician, who purpoſely attended to ſee the effect of his experiment. On finding herſelf baffled, ſhe threw herſelf violently on the ground, and fell into a ſtronger raving fit than any of her former, ſo that they were compelled to confine her more cloſely than ever.

This continued for ſeveral hours, when, on a ſudden, ſhe ſunk into a profound lethargy, in which ſhe remained ſo long that the next day, when Mrs. Rainsford came, ſhe was ſtill totally inſenſible; nor did ſhe rouſe from that ſtate till after another twenty-four hours, when ſhe awoke as from a profound ſleep. This paroxyſm appeared to have been the criſis of her diſorder, for ſhe had never, from

its commencement, ſhewn ſuch ſymptoms of returning reaſon as ſhe did on her emancipation from this long ſtupor.

She had not been many minutes awake before ſhe aſked if Mrs. Rainsford had been there that morning; and on the nurſe ſaying that ſhe had not, ſhe aſked if ſhe would come; to which receiving a reply in the affirmative, ſhe ſhook her head and ſaid, "Ah, ſhe is very good!"

On Mrs. Rainsford's entering, ſhe ran up to her, quite in an extaſy, and took her by the hand; but ſuddenly ſhrinking back, "How dare I do this!" ſhe cried, "Oh, will you, can you forgive me?"

"Forgive you, Cecilia? oh, yes, you have not offended me."

"Not offended you," exclaimed Cecilia, fixing her eyes eagerly upon her, "yes, but I have, and very very grievouſly too!"

"Oh, do not think ſo, my dear Cecilia; come, let us ſit down and talk together."

They ſat down and converſed for more than an hour. Cecilia's ideas were confuſed; yet ſhe had a conſiderable degree of recollection,

lection, with regard to many things which had paſſed, and aſked many very rational queſtions; and when Mrs. Rainsford was going away, ſhe preſſed her hand with an enthuſiaſtic ardour, and with her eyes looking upwards, "Oh, God," ſhe ſaid, you are my only friend; when will you come and ſee me again?"

"I will come again to-morrow."

"I ſhall think it an age till then — but you are too good."

From this time ſhe gradually amended, and Mrs. Rainsford was conſtant in her viſits, as was alſo Mrs. Meadows, when ſhe was ſufficiently recovered to ſee her; but as yet nothing had paſſed relative to the tranſactions which had taken place during her illneſs, Mrs. Rainsford deferring that till ſhe thought her recovery quite completed.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER IX.

Here let me grow for ever, none divide us!
Methinks, when these protecting arms enfold me,
Long-vanish'd Peace ſeems to return once more,
And spread her dove-like wings again to shield me.

JEPHSON.

IT was juſt about this time that the order arrived from the Governor-General for releaſing Rainsford on his parole, with the notice that he had referred the affair to the deciſion of the Eaſt-India Directors in England. In conſequence of his enlargement, the Colonel, with Mrs. Rainsford, determined to return to Eden, where they hoped to be repaid for the humiliations they had undergone, by the happineſs they ſhould enjoy in each other's ſociety, in the domeſtic way of life to which they muſt now be neceſſarily confined; and

as

as they were to be thus domeſtic, they had no difficulty in perſuading Mrs. Meadows to join their party.

She was not, indeed, more happily circumſtanced with regard to her reputation in the world than themſelves. As ſhe had never been ſo public a character, ſhe could not experience a like deſertion of acquaintance; but all that could be done by the infernal machinations of Dawkins was accompliſhed; and infamous as her character was now eſteemed, ſhe was conſidered as fit company only for Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford. The Divine, it is true, had made overtures for repairing her injuries by marriage, truſting that he had now rendered her refuſal impoſſible, but ſhe ſpurned his offers no leſs reſolutely in this ruined ſtate of her fame, than ſhe had his threats while it was yet unſullied. She would, indeed, before this time, have quitted India; but as Colonel Rainsford had reſolved to return to England, ſhould his degradation be confirmed, ſhe waited the concluſion of that affair, that in ſuch a caſe they might all return together.

After Mrs. Rainsford's return to Eden, ſhe

was not leſs conſtant in her attentions to Cecilia, than while ſhe remained at Calcutta, but viſited her regularly every day, each time obſerving, with the greateſt ſatisfaction, an undoubted amendment in her health and ſtate of mind. At length, thinking both ſufficiently reſtored to bear the mention of the letter, ſhe, one day, as ſhe was ſitting with her, took her hand affectionately, and aſked if ſhe had any recollection of writing a letter to Colonel Rainsford previouſly to her illneſs.

Cecilia threw her arms round Mrs. Rainsford's neck, and reſting her head on her boſom, burſt into an agony of tears, which continued for ſome time with ſuch violence, that Mrs. Rainsford was terrified, and apprehenſive leſt ſhe had been incautious in mentioning the ſubject. But the violence of this agitation after a while ſubſiding, Cecilia raiſed her head, and claſping her hands together, exclaimed, "God in Heaven bleſs you, for ſaving me from firſt beginning ſo painful a recital!"—And again ſhe burſt into a fit of ſobbing and crying, more violent, if poſſible, than before.

When this ſecond tranſport was ſomewhat

abated,

abated, "Oh, Mrs. Rainsford," ſhe cried, "you know not how this ſubject has oppreſſed me!—an hundred times have I wiſhed to mention it; but had no power to give utterance to all that laboured in my boſom."

"Be comforted, Cecilia," ſaid Mrs. Rainsford, tenderly, "and reſt aſſured, that you ſhall not find either my huſband or myſelf ſevere to your faults. You have already ſuffered for them ſufficiently; God forbid that we ſhould increaſe your ſufferings!"

"Faults!—Oh God!—mine are not mere faults!—I have been guilty of the blackeſt crimes!"—And again ſhe reſted her head on Mrs. Rainsford's ſhoulder, as if unable to proceed.

"Let us then drop the ſubject for the preſent,—it is too much for you,—another time we will renew the converſation."

"Oh no, the ice is broken, be the whole extent of my guilt then publiſhed!—Oh, my beſt, my only friend! you remember the laſt fatal evening, that I was at your houſe!—you remember the ſcorn, the ſlight, with which I was treated by the female part of the com-

pany. I did not deſerve it—indeed, I did not;—I had been fooliſh in my conduct it is true, but not criminal; I felt conſcious that the reports circulated againſt me were falſe; and I was indignant at the idea of their being believed. It was in this temper of mind that I received your note; I thought that you too, were deſerting me; and yielding myſelf up wholly to a blind impulſe of rage and diſappointment, I determined to execute ſome deſperate revenge, and wrote the letter in queſtion, which I took care ſhould be ſent to Eden, at a time when I knew it would fall into your hands. I know not what has paſſed ſince, for I never afterwards was perfectly in my ſenſes; but I learn that my huſband, and every one elſe, excepting yourſelf and Mrs. Meadows, refuſe to ſee me."

It was with no ſmall difficulty, and not without frequent interruptions from ſobs and tears, that Cecilia got through this relation. Mrs. Rainsford was not ſurpriſed at what ſhe heard, for it was what ſhe had long ſuſpected; but alarmed, leſt this exertion ſhould quite overpower Cecilia, ſhe forbore to remark on the

the ſtory, but exerted all poſſible efforts to conſole and compoſe her, which being at length in ſome meaſure accompliſhed, ſhe told her that no more ſhould then be ſaid, but ſhould ſhe find herſelf tolerably well the next day, ſhe would then carry her to Eden, and at a proper time inform her of all that had paſſed during her illneſs.

"Oh that I might accompany you now!" cried Cecilia, in a moſt impaſſioned tone, "this houſe is horror to me!—would that I could but leave it!"

"Well then, my love, your wiſhes ſhall be complied with; you ſhall return with me directly."

Never was exceſs of tranſport more exquiſitely felt, or more ſtrongly expreſſed, than by Cecilia at that moment; nor did it appear to ſuffer the leaſt abatement during the whole of the ride to Eden. When they arrived there, Mrs. Rainsford conducted her up to the room ſhe had inhabited before her marriage, where, as ſhe ſeemed quite compoſed and happy, ſhe left her under the care of her attendant, and went to inform the Co-

lonel what ſhe had done. They agreed that he had better not ſee her that day; but, ſhould ſhe continue well, viſit her on the morrow, when ſhe might be informed of the fatal conſequences of her mad paſſion.

And the following morning this was accordingly done.—When ſhe had heard all that had paſſed, and the diſagreeable predicament in which her friends ſtood through her intemperance, "And yet I am here!" ſhe exclaimed;—then fixing her eyes on them earneſtly, "Let me look at you," ſhe ſaid, "you muſt be angels not mortals—mortals could not thus forgive!—But ah, tell me, is it yet too late to repair this miſchief?—Let me publiſh to the world your innocence and my ſhame; I ſhall never be eaſy till I have thus made all the atonement in my power for the crimes I have committed."

And though they wiſhed not to expoſe the guilty, but in ſome meaſure unfortunate, Cecilia, more than was neceſſary, yet it ſeemed ſo indiſpenſable that Colonel Rainsford's vindication ſhould be made as public as his diſgrace, that he loſt no time in taking the proper

per ſteps for that purpoſe. He went to Calcutta, and there related the whole affair to Captain Stanley, who readily undertook to go and clear it up immediately to Macdonnel.

He found him and Yelverton ſitting together in the houſe of the latter, where Macdonnel had reſided ſince his ſeparation from his wife, when he related the facts that were come to light, and concluded with ſaying that Colonel Rainsford expected they would now do him juſtice, and confeſs that they had been in the wrong, and proceeded againſt him on inſufficient grounds.

The hot-headed Macdonnel at firſt bluſtered and ſwore that this was ſome new lie invented by that curſed raſcal Rainsford, and he would not make any apology, no, he'd be damned if he would.

"Nay, Sir," ſaid Stanley, "this ſwearing and violence will avail you nothing. If you chooſe to make this apology voluntarily, ſo that the affair may be cleared up, and Colonel Rainsford's honour vindicated, and his conduct cleared to the Governor-General and the Company, he will require no more; but if you refuſe

refuſe him this juſtice, he muſt have recourſe to rougher methods for his vindication, which will only farther expoſe both yourſelf and Mrs. Macdonnel."

"Well, he may do as he pleaſes; but I hope he does not ſuppoſe that Patrick Macdonnel will ever make an apology to any man living,—and ſo you may tell him and be damned to him."

But Yelverton, who though warm in his temper was yet open to conviction, when he found that he and his friend were very clearly in the wrong, ſaid to Macdonnel, "Come, come, Patrick, this really does not ſeem a matter to be thus treated; Captain Stanley is a man of honour, and would not engage in a dirty errand. Let us then at leaſt ſee Colonel Rainsford, and if it ſhall appear that the affair is now accurately ſtated, it will be highly incumbent on us, if we wiſh to preſerve the character of gentlemen, to make the apology and repreſentation required."

Macdonnel finding that he was not ſeconded in his bluſtering plan, ſuddenly wheeled about, and turning to Stanley, "Moſt certainly,

tainly, Sir," he ſaid, "I know you for a man of honour, and entreat your pardon for the expreſſions I uſed; I will ſee my wife, and if the circumſtances turn out according to your ſtatement, which I cannot doubt, I will join my friend here in any proper acknowledgement of our error."

"Colonel Rainsford is now at Calcutta, and both he and myſelf will gladly accompany you to Eden."

They accepted the propoſal, and Stanley went to inform Rainsford what he had done, when the four gentlemen immediately proceeded to the place of their deſtination. The interview between Macdonnel and his wife was ſupported by the latter better than could have been expected; when ſhe confirming what had before been ſtated, nothing remained but to repair the miſchief that had been done by every means in the power of the proſecuting party.

And firſt, in the preſence of Stanley, Macdonnel and Yelverton owned that they had acted haſtily, and without ſufficiently inveſtigating the affair, and aſked pardon of Rainsford.

ford. The next thing was that they drew up a ſtate of the caſe as it really ſtood, which they inſtantly tranſmitted to the Governor-General, praying that he would forward it to the Court of Directors with all poſſible expedition; and laſtly, they applied themſelves with equal induſtry to reſtore the Colonel's character in Calcutta, as before they had employed in traducing it.

The Governor ſent off the ſecond diſpatches with the utmoſt alacrity, and with much greater ſatisfaction than he had ſent the former; for ſuch was his high opinion of Rainsford, that he was very unwilling to believe he could be the villain repreſented. He ſaw the courier depart however, not without the moſt alarming apprehenſions that it was even then too late to counter-act the ill impreſſions already made, as he too well knew that prejudices are much eaſier eſtabliſhed than removed.

A reconciliation now took place between Mr. and Mrs. Macdonnel, and "*the ſtorm of intellectual ſtrife*" which they had raiſed, ſeemed to have given both ſo wholeſome a leſſon, that

that it promiſed to operate as the tempeſts of the phyſical world, and clearing away the noxious vapours with which their minds had been enveloped, open to them a proſpect of purer happineſs in future. And thus the three families of Rainsford, Yelverton, and Macdonnel were reſtored to the ſame amity and intimacy which had ſubſiſted previouſly to the rupture.

All theſe events made another grand revolution in the public mind, and the ſwarm which ſo lately had deſerted and vilified Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford, now ſatisfied that the Colonel would be reſtored to his former honours, began to flutter again in the ſun which they beheld thus emerging from behind a cloud. But that ſun would no longer foſter in its beams ſuch a tribe of ephemera, "*the important nothings of a day*," who might on the next, with as little reaſon, turn their backs on him again; and thus the ſociety at Eden remained confined to ſuch an one as alone is really valuable—to a few ſelect friends.

Nothing remained now for re-inſtating Colonel Rainsford in his former proſperity, but the

the deciſion of the Court of Directors, which, as every one wiſhed it to be favourable, every one ſuppoſed would be ſo, and the arrival of the meſſenger which was to bring it was expected with the utmoſt impatience.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER X.

Nor well alive, nor wholly dead they were,
But ſome faint signs of feeble life appear;
The wand'ring breath was on the wing to part,
Weak was the pulſe, and hardly heav'd the heart.

DRYDEN.

DURING this interval, Colonel Rainsford was one morning to accompany Captain Stanley to a ſmall eſtate a few miles from Calcutta, which the latter was in treaty to purchaſe for a friend. They accordingly ſat out juſt at ſun-riſe, when paſſing a wood at the outſkirts of the town they met Dawkins, who ſtarted at the ſight of them, appearing extremely confuſed, and as if heſitating whether to proceed towards the town, or return into the wood whence he had juſt iſſued. At length

length he went on, but his looks and manner made ſo ſtrong an impreſſion upon Rainsford, that he could not help exclaiming, "Good God! what mischief can that man have been deviſing? Did you not obſerve his confuſion, the dark lowering clouds on his countenance, which ſeemed to ſpeak a mind racked with conſcious guilt, and his heſitation whether to go back or proceed forwards?"

"No, I cannot ſay I noticed him,—but do you know him then?"

"Ay, much too well!—it is Dawkins."

"Dawkins!—what the fiend who perſecutes the moſt charming of women?"

"Even he!—you cannot wonder that where he is I ſuſpect mischief to be hatching."

"Your ſuſpicions are certainly moſt juſtifiable. Suppoſe we go and explore the wood, as he ſeemed to come thence."

"Indeed I ſhall be better ſatisfied than in going on."—And, ſo ſaying, the two cavaliers turned their horſes thither by the entrance at which Dawkins came out, and purſued a winding path which ſeemed to lead down to

the

the river. When they had proceeded ſome way, the trees grew ſo thick that they found it better to diſmount, and tying their horſes to one of them, they purſued their route on foot, till at length they deſcried ſomething white lying on the ground at a little diſtance, to which they made up, and found two men whom at firſt they ſuppoſed dead; but on examination they perceived that, though ſenſeleſs, life was not entirely extinguiſhed in either. One was in the dreſs of a Hindoo, and appeared to have fainted through loſs of blood, from a deep wound in his ſide by a knife or dagger; and the other an European who had marks of having received a violent blow on the temple, by which he had been knocked down and ſtunned.

They immediately bound up the wound of the bleeding man, and then got them conveyed to Calcutta, and procured them proper medical aſſiſtance, when they were both pronounced in a very dangerous way. Rainsford however ordered that every means ſhould be taken for their recovery, and at the ſame time applied himſelf with all poſſible aſſiduity to finding

finding out who they might be, and how they came into ſuch a ſituation, in which there was ſufficient reaſon to believe Dawkins concerned, and conſequently to obtain a warrant for apprehending him on this ſuſpicion.

In the knowledge of who they were, Rainsford was ſoon gratified. Benington, who had heard of the affair, and learned where the two unfortunate men were lodged, was led by the general benevolence of his diſpoſition to viſit them, when to his no ſmall aſtoniſhment he found the Hindoo to be his ſervant Ooſhawn, of whoſe deſtiny he had been ignorant for ſo long a time; and the other, Weymar the attorney, who had never been ſeen at Calcutta ſince his abſconding juſt before the trial concerning the validity of his bond.

Here a wide field for ſpeculation was opened, and Benington, had he wanted any motive to ſecond his benevolence in watching over theſe men, and contributing all in his power to their recovery, would have found a ſtrong ſtimulus, in the hope that the return of their ſenſes might lead to the develope-

ment

ment of ſome very dark tranſactions, and elucidate the myſterious affair of the bond. He had always ſuſpected ſome colluſion between Weymar and Dawkins in that buſineſs, and the ſituations in which they were found, ſeemed to ſtrengthen that ſuſpicion, and give reaſon to conjecture that a diſagreement in villainy might have led to the preſent cataſtrophe. It involved Ooſhawn alſo, in whoſe diſappearance there had always been ſomething unaccountable, in a ſuſpicion that he had ſome concern in the affair, and even rendered doubtful the character of the derviſe himſelf, ſince on the new aſpect which it wore, nothing ſeemed more probable than that the whole tranſaction relative to the bond was a ſettled conſpiracy among the four.

This ſuſpicion was farther ſtrengthened, as Dawkins had been ſought for in vain in the town of Calcutta, and conſcious guilt therefore ſeemed to have driven him into concealment. But the ſearch ſtopped not here, perſons were ſent to all parts for ſeveral miles round the town, and a conſiderable reward offered for his apprehenſion. As no tidings

of

of him however arrived before evening, Rainsford returned to Eden, where he recounted his day's adventure, in which it ſeemed probable that Mrs. Meadows would ultimately appear to be deeply intereſted. She liſtened to his relation with a mixture of ſurprize and horror, and when he had concluded, exclaimed, "Oh, heavens! then perhaps my Charles may yet live!—but no," ſhe added, "they have murdered him; the villain Dawkins doubtleſs murdered him, that he might get rid of ſo great an obſtacle to poſſeſſing me himſelf!—Oh execrable wretch!—Oh unfortunate Charles!"

Colonel Rainsford made no attempt to controvert this idea, unwilling to encourage hopes for which, when he reaſoned fairly on the matter, he could hardly ſee any reaſonable foundation; yet in his own mind he was much inclined to flatter himſelf that his friend was ſtill alive, and he looked forwards with the utmoſt impatience to Ooſhawn's recovery, from whom he had ſtrong expectations of gaining, if not abſolutely intelligence of Charles, at leaſt ſome clue for a guidance to farther re-

ſearches

ſearches into his myſterious fate. If the derviſe were not a rogue, he might be a dupe, and Charles might have been conveyed away and kept in concealment; nay, he had always been inclined to ſuſpect, from the whole of Dawkins's proceedings, that he knew him to be ſtill alive; but theſe being merely his own conjectures he choſe not to communicate them: yet he ſecretly reſolved, that ſhould nothing ſatisfactory now come to light, he would go to the derviſe's cell, nor quit it till he had detected the murderers, or ſatisfied himſelf that Charles was ſtill alive, and diſcovered the place of his detention.

On the following morning, as the party at Eden were ſitting at breakfaſt, a ſervant came in, and ſaid that a maimed ſoldier was at the door, who wiſhed to ſpeak to Colonel Rainsford in private. The Colonel ordered him to be carried into the library, whither he immediately went, and beheld a glorious ſpecimen of the bleſſings of a military life. The man had a bandage over one eye, or rather "*over the hole his eye did once inhabit*," for eye he had none, it had been torn out of the

ſocket; he had a large ſcar in his cheek, his fore teeth were all knocked out, one arm was taken off above the elbow, and under the other arm he had a crutch to ſupport himſelf, his leg being lame from a wound which he had received in his hip.

Rainsford beholding ſuch an object, deſired him to ſit down, for which the ſoldier thanked him, ſaying, "Indeed, Sir, in my mangled condition, any exertion is painful and fatiguing, and I am now nearly exhauſted; but I could not reſiſt joining the ſearch for one of the greateſt villains that ever diſgraced human nature, and who, I am happy to ſay, is now likely to meet the puniſhment he ſo juſtly deſerves, when the earth will be rid of a monſter whoſe crimes are enough to taint the air which he breathes; you will eaſily gueſs, Colonel Rainsford, to whom I allude,—Mr. Dawkins is taken."

Rainsford was rather ſurprized to find in a common ſoldier a manner and mode of expreſſion ſo much above his ſituation, and replied, "I thank you, my friend, extremely for this information, but am concerned that in your

your crippled condition you fatigued yourſelf with coming to communicate it; let me get you ſome refreſhment,"—and he rang the bell to order ſome.

"For ſome refreſhment I ſhall indeed be much obliged; but diſtreſs not yourſelf, Colonel, with the idea that I came for the ſole purpoſe of informing you of this arreſt; that you would ſoon learn from other quarters; my errand is to communicate circumſtances of even greater importance, and which will ſhew you more fully how great a villain this is, whoſe career is now on the eve of its termination. I underſtand, Sir, that Mrs. Meadows is with you; will ſhe, do you think, receive with yourſelf the confeſſion of a ſincere penitent, who has injured her in the cruelleſt manner?"

"How much you ſurprize me, my friend! may I aſk your name?"

"You do not then recollect me?"

"No, indeed, I do not."

"I did not ſuppoſe you would. You have it is true frequently ſeen me, but not in a way at all likely to impreſs my features on your

remembrance; and in my now mangled condition I have found by experience that they who formerly knew me beſt, cannot trace, under ſuch a diſguiſe, the face and figure of one they had been accuſtomed to ſee in ſo different a ſtate. But will you requeſt Mrs. Meadows's preſence, Colonel, ſhe is more deeply intereſted in what I have to diſcloſe than yourſelf."

"Firſt, tell me if you know whether Mr. Meadows be alive; if ſuch be your intelligence, we muſt communicate it to her with caution, too ſudden burſts of joy are as fatal as grief."

"Oh, would to God that I could ſay he were alive, of what a load of anguiſh would my heart be lightened; but he is gone—gone, paſt recall! yet, not as you ſuppoſe; he was himſelf his own executioner, long after the time when you ſuppoſed him murdered by another."

"How much you ſurprize me! but I will call Mrs. Meadows,"—and he went and told her what had paſſed between himſelf and the ſoldier, on which ſhe accompanied him to the

library.

library. As ſhe entered, the man roſe up and bowed reſpectfully; ſhe ſurveyed him earneſtly but could not trace the reſemblance of any one whom ſhe had ever known, which he obſerving, ſaid, "Neither do you ſeem to recollect me, Madam?"

"No indeed, my friend."

"It ſeems plain then that my perſon cannot be identified; on that I relied, or I had never more ſet foot in the town of Calcutta. Colonel Rainsford, you are a man of honour, on that I muſt depend when I freely acknowledge that you ſee before you one who has been a very great criminal, a greater than I could be proved by any means but my own confeſſion. What I have therefore to aſk of of you is, a promiſe that in conſequence of the diſcloſure I am about to make, of crimes not cognizable by any earthly tribunal, you will become my interceſſor with a friend of yours to forbear proſecuting me on account of one for which I am moſt undoubtedly amenable to the law."

"But ſuch an engagement I will not enter into; if you really do conſider me as a man

of honour, you will be convinced that I ſhall not make an improper uſe of any thing which you may reveal in confidence, or refuſe to intercede where you wiſh, if I can do it conſiſtently with the character for which you give me credit."

"Well then, to ſhew you how firm a reliance I have on your honour, Colonel, and on the lenity of this amiable lady here, I ſhall without farther preamble own a name, in repeating which I ſhall diſcloſe a great deal, the name of Winterton!"

"Winterton! Oh God, the man who finally ruined my Charles in my eſteem!"

"And who eloped with a ſum of money belonging to Mr. Benington and Mr. Meadows!"

"Yes, I am the villain who did both; but, if it be any apology for ſuch deeds, I can truly ſay that I did them at the inſtigation of one, in compariſon with whoſe crimes mine are trifling deviations from morality. Liſten to my ſtory." He then proceeded to relate the origin and progreſs of his connection with Dawkins by means of

Fanny

Fanny Warren; but as the reader is already acquainted with that wretch's infernal machinations till his departure for India, we ſhall paſs over that part of Winterton's narrative, and proceed to the tranſactions after his arrival there; relating the former part in our own character rather than in that of Winterton, in order to introduce ſome incidents which will be better narrated now than deferred to another period.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER XI.

Oh heaven, that such companions thoud'st unfold,
And put in every honest hand a whip
To lash the rascal naked through the world,
Even from the east to the west!

SHAKSPEARE.

AS one of Dawkins's principal motives for leaving England was fear of detection in his mal-practices, ſo, on arriving in India, he was no leſs ſolicitous that certain tranſactions, which were known to his agents there, ſhould remain undiſcovered. But while Winterton and Fanny continued at Calcutta, he felt conſcious that he never could be perfectly ſecure, well aware that thoſe who could be corrupted by him to ſuch baſe purpoſes, were not likely to prove incorruptible to others, on the ſuppoſition that it might prove more for their advantage

advantage to betray his intereſts than to preſerve their faith to him inviolate.

Of courſe, therefore, his firſt object was to remove perſons ſo dangerous out of the way; and before he had been many days at Calcutta, his mind, fertile in reſource, began to practice on Winterton for this purpoſe. He queſtioned him, without appearing to have any particular reaſon, how long he had been in Benington's ſervice; and on hearing that it was more than ten years, he caſually remarked that was a great while to have remained in ſo inferior a ſtation, and he thought that he ought long ſince to have been advanced to a participation in the buſineſs; obſerving, at the ſame time, that it was a good thing to be a favourite, for Charles Meadows had not been kept to a tedious ten year's clerkſhip, but was at once admitted as a partner in all the merchant's concerns. By ſuch inſinuations he firſt ſowed the ſeeds of diſcontent, with his ſituation and maſter, in the breaſt of Winterton; and diſcontent is a weed of ſuch rapid growth, that after the ſeed is ſcattered on the ſoil, it requires no farther culture, it thrives ſufficiently

on the nouriſhment contained within itſelf, and having once gained a ſettlement, is rarely if ever perfectly eradicated.

Poſſeſſed with the idea that he was an injured and ſlighted man, the clerk never loſt ſight of it, but ſuffered it continually to corrode his mind, till at length he conceived a mortal hatred to Benington, and was ready, on a very ſlight hint thrown out, to make free with as much of his money as he could come at, to which he perſuaded himſelf he had a juſt claim, and to abſcond with that and his Fanny together. Dawkins, though privy to this tranſaction, took care to manage ſo that no poſſible ſuſpicion could fall on him; but when he knew that the gentleman and lady were both fairly off undiſcovered, he thought he might as well make an effort to divide the ſpoil, and went after them to Patna, the place of their deſtination.

But on his arrival there, he found Winterton by no means diſpoſed to ſhare his plunder with any other than the ſharer in his flight; this was the more mortifying to Dawkins, as he knew the whole tranſaction to be entirely

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the fruit of his own ſuggeſtion, and as he began to be very much in want of pecuniary ſupplies. His hopes of church employment in India had all been baffled, the two thouſand pounds given him by Mr. Blandford were reduced at leaſt three-fourths, and no immediate proſpect of addition to it preſented itſelf, ſo that in deſpair of ſucceeding in the world by knavery, he at times almoſt reſolved to tack about and try what might be gained by honeſty. But this was a track he had yet to learn, whereas the path-way of knavery was ſo habitual to him, that he hardly knew how to forſake the one in order to ſtrike into the other, nor were the reſources of his invention in iniquity yet entirely exhauſted.

After a ſhort time, he found means to work Fanny up to quarrel with her huſband, and fly to Chunar with him and the money, leaving Winterton to ſhift for himſelf, who, as the only reſource left, entered as a ſoldier with a party of Engliſh and Seapoys then paſſing through the town. Theſe proceeded on to Chunar, where one of the firſt objects that preſented itſelf to Winterton's eyes, was his

wife in the utmoſt diſtreſs, Mr. Dawkins having taken a French leave of her, but not of her money, for he had choſen to make that his companion, and no one knew whither he was gone; but it afterwards appeared that he had made his way back to Calcutta.

Fanny remained not long in diſtreſs; ſhe had not yet entirely loſt her beauty, and ſhe found favour in the ſight of a young Engliſh officer, who was going to Calcutta, and offered to take her with him. She, however, ſo far acted honourably by her huſband, that ſhe would not go without his conſent, but that ſhe found no difficulty in obtaining. Their recent quarrel, and her elopement with Dawkins, had contributed greatly to alienate his affections; and beſides, as he had no means of maintaining her, he found it quite as convenient to let her provide for herſelf.

She accordingly went to Calcutta; but the officer, on his arrival there, found that his regiment was under orders to embark immediately for Madras, whither no women were allowed to accompany it. He was therefore conſtrained to bid adieu to his Fanny; but as

perſons

perſons in his ſituation are ſeldom in very affluent circumſtances, he was unable to leave her ſuch a ſupply as could keep her long above neceſſity, and thus ſhe was ſoon reduced to a ſtate of the extremeſt wretchedneſs. It was then that ſhe was diſcovered by Mr. Benington, and that thinking herſelf dying, and expreſſing ſo much anxiety to ſee Charles Meadows, the worthy merchant went to ſolicit his attendance.

In the interim of his abſence, Dawkins, who knew of her being at Calcutta, and had kept a watchful eye over her, finding that ſhe had ſeen Benington, dreaded leſt diſcoveries might be made not at all conſonant to his intereſt; and though he would not move a limb or a muſcle to reſcue her from the miſery to which he had himſelf reduced her, he now thought proper *kindly* to attend her death-bed, on pretence of praying by her in quality of his clerical office. He found her, though ſick and faint, yet ſo far revived by the cordials which had been adminiſtered through the care and attention of Benington, as to have ſtrength, unleſs timely precautions were taken for her prevention,

prevention, to utter more truths than he choſe ſhould be revealed; deſiring the nurſe then to withdraw, he added to the cordials ſhe had already taken, a doſe of laudanum ſufficiently powerful to prevent the *ill* conſequences he had apprehended; and from this *pious* taſk he was returning when met by Benington, Rainsford, and Charles Meadows.

The conſequences of Dawkins's viſit are already known, and here therefore we take leave of the wretched Fanny, from whoſe deplorable fate two important leſſons may be drawn: The young and unwary female may be inſtructed to beware of giving way to a paſſion, the indulgence of which is attended with conſequences ſo fatal; and the virtuous part of mankind may be taught that too great ſeverity to a firſt fault, is ſo far from reclaiming the object by whom it was committed, that it neceſſarily drives her into a repetition, which muſt terminate at laſt in endleſs crimes and boundleſs miſery.

Winterton, meanwhile, went through a courſe of very ſevere ſervice, in which he was reduced to his mangled and lacerated ſtate, till

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at length, after various fortunes, and dreadful ſufferings, he was carried to Bombay to be cured of the wound in his hip, which had for ſome time worn a very alarming aſpect. "Here, Sir," he ſaid, "I was confined to my bed many weeks, but youth and a good conſtitution finally prevailed over my calamity, and I began to be able to get out again and hobble about. As I was one day on the beach, judge of my aſtoniſhment, I ſaw at no great diſtance, coming towards me, Mr. Meadows himſelf."

"My Charles!" exclaimed Mrs. Meadows, "Oh God, when, where, how!—what time was this?—Good God, at Bombay!—why this was after he was ſuppoſed dead!—but oh, you have ſaid already that he lives not now."

"Oh no, Madam, pray do not hurry and agitate yourſelf;—he lived but a very ſhort time after this."

"Oh heavens! when will theſe tortures end?—but let me not interrupt you;—pray go on, Sir."

"Conſcious guilt flew inſtantly in my face, —and

—and oh what a ſeries of guilt had I not to recollect!—My heart ſhrunk within me, I almoſt wiſhed the rolling waves to ſwallow me and my crimes at that moment. Though almoſt convinced that I could not be known, I dreaded nothing ſo much as to meet a glance from the eyes of a man whom I had ſo cruelly injured, and, turning involuntarily away, I crept behind a maſs of rock to conceal myſelf and my ſhame together. But, oh God! I ſaw him look at me, as I thought, with an eye of ſcrutinizing attention, and detection ſtared me in the face. Yet I believe his regards were only attracted by the miſerable figure I made, for ſhortly after I ſaw him reaſcend the rock and return towards the town.

"While he remained on the beach, I had obſerved him converſing with a ſoldier, as if well acquainted with him; and at his departure therefore I addreſſed this man, with an enquiry if he could inform me of the name of that gentleman, and whence he came. The ſoldier in reply ſaid, that his name was Williams, and that he had arrived at Bombay a few days before, in company with himſelf and four

four of his comrades, who had eſcaped very wonderfully from captivity at Agra; but Mr. Williams had not been the aſſociate of their eſcape, only joined them ſome little time after, and travelled on foot with them all that length of way, conſiderably above eight hundred miles. He was in a ſtate of great diſtreſs, and, from the relation he gave, the preſervation of his life ſeemed to have been almoſt miraculous. He had been engaged in a voyage for tracing the courſe of the great river Burrampooter, in which they were attacked by the Tartars, and the whole party excepting himſelf maſſacred; after which he had traverſed alone the moſt ſolitary parts of Aſia, till he was led accidentally to the ſpot where they had met. This, ſaid the ſoldier, was all we ever learned of his ſtory, for as he did not ſeem to like entering into particulars, we forbore to be inquiſitive, but we loved him for his ſweetneſs of temper and kindneſs of heart, and were almoſt ſorry when we reached Bombay where we were to part from him again;—but this ſeparation is unavoidable, as we muſt join our regiment at Madras,

Madras, and he intends going to Calcutta by the firſt ſhip that ſhall ſail."

"My God," cried Mrs. Meadows, "what perils has he not encountered!—but are you ſure that this was really Mr. Meadows? you tell me he was called by the name of Williams."

"As ſure, Madam," anſwered Winterton, "as that I have been one of the greateſt of villains in my conduct towards him.—I knew him too well to be miſtaken."

"And wherefore then could he have aſſumed another name?—But why do I interrupt you with theſe trifling queſtions?—Pray proceed."

"For ſeveral ſucceſſive days I ſaw Mr. Meadows regularly come down to the beach, as if in extreme impatience for the ſailing of the ſhip by which he was to depart. Sometimes I thought he looked at me, as if inclined to enter into converſation with me, but I continued to ſhrink away from his notice; yet I often reflected whether it were not my duty to reveal myſelf, acknowledge all my offences, and throw myſelf on his mercy for their pardon; and I had at laſt actually worked myſelf into

into a reſolution to make this effort the following morning, ſhould I meet him on the beach as uſual.—But the hour when he had commonly come down thither paſſed over, and he appeared not;—I thought at firſt that he might be departed, but no ſhip for Calcutta had ſailed, and I wondered much what might occaſion his abſence. At length I heard,—oh how was my blood almoſt frozen with horror at the relation!—that the day before, when dining at the Governor's, he was ſuddenly taken ill and left the room, ſaying he was only affected with the heat; nor did any one ſuſpect the fatal conſequences that enſued,—ſuſpect that this was the coming on of a fit of phrenzy, in which he flew to the top of a high rock juſt out of the town, whence he precipitated himſelf, and was ſwallowed up by the waves below."

"Oh wretched, oh unfortunate Charles!—he recovered then from a wound inflicted in one fit of phrenzy, only to periſh more effectually in another attack of that moſt dreadful of human calamities!—And did you never learn what occaſioned this ſudden ſeizure?"

"No

"No one could conjecture; he had been frequently at the governor's, who was charmed with his ſociety, nor had he ever ſhewn ſymptoms of derangement, previouſly to that moment, either in his journey from Agra, or during his ſtay at Bombay."

"Oh God! and is it certain that he ended his life as you deſcribe?—Yet, why do I torture myſelf with other ideas?"

"I am as confident of it as I can be of a fact to which I was not an eye-witneſs. I have every reaſon, Madam, to believe the truth of what I have now told you; and moſt certain it is, that he was never after ſeen at Bombay."

"Oh yes, it muſt be ſo, elſe why came he not hither as he intended?—Alas! we too well know that he was ſubject to ſuch ſudden ſallies;—and how long may it be ſince this event happened?"

"More than a year, I think, Madam.—I ſtayed at Bombay from that time till about three weeks ſince, when I ſailed from thence in order to come hither, where I have been arrived only a few days. On this ſtep I think I ſhould not have ventured, had I not relied

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on my altered form for concealing me till a favourable opportunity ſhould preſent itſelf for diſcloſing all that oppreſſes my mind, and how beſt to effect this diſcloſure has occaſioned me many an anxious moment. Two days ſince I was wandering about the wood, where the bodies of poor Ooſhawn and Weymar were diſcovered, when I met the former, whom I immediately recollected, having known him as Mr. Benington's ſervant. I accoſted him—he ſeemed terrified and uneaſy, and as if wiſhing to ſhrink from obſervation, nor at firſt anſwered my ſalutation:—I repeated it, obſerving that he appeared alarmed, and offering him my ſervices if they could afford him any aſſiſtance. He eyed me with evident diſtruſt, when I aſſured him he might truſt me, that I had no motive for any offers but the ſeeing a perſon in diſtreſs and wiſhing to relieve him. He then thanked me warmly, and ſaid, "Oh that I could be certain you were to be truſted!—I want a friend indeed!—I have one at Calcutta, but I dread entering that town leſt I ſhould firſt meet an enemy!"

"I re-

"I reiterated my aſſurances of good faith, and by degrees drew him into converſation, till he at length diſcloſed to me many particulars, of which, till then, I was ignorant; as, Mr. Meadows's return to Calcutta in a very deplorable ſtate of health, his own recommendation of him to Jeipal for the cure of his malady, and his voyage to Chinſura in conſequence. But with theſe, Madam, I preſume, you are already acquainted, and it is therefore needleſs for me to dwell on them."

"Oh, too well I know them!—But did Ooſhawn tell you nothing of his own fate?"

"He did, Madam; he told me, that three days after Mr. Benington left Chinſura, he was, himſelf, ſeized by Dawkins and Weymar, who ſold him as a ſlave to a perſon, by whom he was immediately carried into the interior of the country, whence he had recently eſcaped, and arrived in the wood but a few hours before I met with him; but dreading the ſight of either of his perſecutors, he was afraid of entering Calcutta, and wiſhed he could make known his ſituation to his old maſter Mr. Benington, whom he was confi-

dent

dent would immediately take him into his protection.

"I was ſo touched with the poor fellow's ſtory, and his fears," continued Winterton, "that I was reſolved, by ſome means or other, to impart it to Mr. Benington; and having made him this promiſe, I took my leave, pondering how it might beſt be accompliſhed. The next morning I had nearly arranged a plan for this communication, when I accidentally heard that two men had been diſcovered, wounded in the wood, and were brought into the city. Ooſhawn immediately occurred to me, and haſtening to the place where I was informed they were lodged, I inſtantly recognized the poor Hindoo, and was fatally convinced that he had ſufficient ground for his apprehenſions. The other, man I knew not by his perſon, but hearing the name of Weymar mentioned, I had heard enough to ſatisfy me that I beheld a villain, and to induce a ſuſpicion that he had diſcovered Ooſhawn's retreat, and attempting to ſacrifice him to his reſentment, had alſo fallen himſelf in the conflict.

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"In a ſhort time after, learning the ſuſpicious manner in which Mr. Dawkins had been met that morning coming out of the wood, and that in conſequence a warrant had been iſſued for his apprehenſion, as the probable perpetrator of the double murder, anxious to aſſiſt in bringing ſuch a monſter to juſtice, I was irreſiſtibly led to join one of the parties ſent in purſuit of him. It was now that I learned the farther particulars relative to Mr. Meadows's fate, which have been reported and believed in theſe parts; and you will judge, Madam, how much I muſt have been aſtoniſhed, after having ſeen him alive at Bombay at the time I have already mentioned, to find it the univerſal belief here, that he had died ſo long before at the Derviſe's cell:—Indeed, I am totally at a loſs how to reconcile all the parts of this ſtrange, myſterious ſtory. Much more *muſt* be known before this can poſſibly be effected, and I hope all *will* be revealed, unleſs the attempt which the villain has made on his life ſhall prove to have been ſo far ſucceſsful as that his lips are ſealed for ever!"

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER XII.

——— Here it stings!
Who can appease its anguish? How it burns!
What hand the barb'd envenom'd thought can draw?
What healing hand can pour the balm of Peace,
And turn my sight undaunted on the tomb!

YOUNG.

WINTERTON had scarcely finished his relation, when a summons arrived for Rainsford to hasten immediately to Calcutta, in order to attend at Dawkins's examination, against whom he must be one of the principal evidence.

The place in which this wretch was apprehended was among the ruins of the mosque, which had not long before been the scene of the bloodless rencontre between Rainsford and Macdonnel. Thither he had fled, after meeting

ing with the Colonel and Captain Stanley; and at the time he was diſcovered, had been concealed there more than twenty-four hours without having eaten a morſel. When he perceived the officers of juſtice ſurrounding his retreat, and that eſcape was impoſſible and reſiſtance vain, he drew from his pocket a piſtol with which he had long been prepared, for the purpoſe of employing it either againſt others or himſelf, according to the emergency of the caſe, and aimed it directly at his own head. But if rage at detected villainy made him deſperate, the ſtings of Conſcience made him a coward; his palſied hand trembled at performing the office which his guilty ſoul required! — He miſſed his aim, and the ball tearing the fleſh on his neck and ſhoulder, left the mortal parts untouched. In this ſtate he was carried to Calcutta, where his wound was dreſſed; but faint with the loſs of blood, and half frantic at the proſpect of ignominy now opened before him, he was ſoon attacked with a violent fever, which threatened, in a ſhort time, to conſummate the work which the piſtol had left unfiniſhed.

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In this ſituation he was found by Rainsford, who ſet out from Eden, attended by Winterton, immediately on receiving his ſummons. On their arrival at Calcutta, they were conducted to the room where the wounded priſoner was lodged, who, on ſeeing them, exclaimed, while he ſhuddered with horror, "Now my torments indeed begin!—Oh that I had taken a better aim!—But curſe on my coward ſoul, while I ſought my life, I yet dreaded to take it!"

"Mr. Dawkins," ſaid Rainsford, "it is equally vain for you now to attempt to conceal or palliate your guilt, ſince it ſtands detected in its blackeſt colours. Know you this man?" pointing to Winterton.

Dawkins looked at him very earneſtly;—"No," he ſaid, "I do not know him:—What of him?"

"His features you may not recollect; but hear his name and tremble,—Winterton!"

"Winterton!" and he ſurveyed him from head to foot three or four times.—"Well, be it ſo; but flatter not yourſelf, therefore, that my guilt is *fully* detected; from him you can

learn but half a ſtory; from me you ſhall not know another ſyllable!—So far, at leaſt, I will revenge my fall!"

"And what will that avail you?"

"I know not, nor I care not; it will mortify you who are gaping for wonderful diſcoveries, and that is ſufficient."

Firm to this reſolution, he remained ſilent for many days; nor could threats or perſuaſions induce him to utter a word; but as he approached nearer and nearer to the borders of

> That undiscovered country, from whoſe bourne
> No traveller returns, ——
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

his reſolution began to fail;—the horrors of death which encompaſſed him on all ſides, ſhook his boaſted firmneſs to the centre;—he wiſhed to believe the preſent world his all of exiſtence, then could he have faced death to the laſt with unſhaken boldneſs. But his terrors of another life were too great to permit his diſbelieving it; and the more earneſtly he ſought to perſuade himſelf that he was ſinking into eternal ſleep, the more fixed became his

conviction

conviction that he ſhould awake again to never-ending torments!

Thus reduced to that ſtate of mind in which ſuperſtition could ſcarcely fail to make ſucceſsful inroads, he now thought only of what means were left him on this ſide the gulph, to mitigate the horrors in ſtore for him on the other; and of theſe, confeſſion appeared the moſt efficacious.

To confeſſion therefore he had recourſe, and, by the diſcoveries he thus made, added one more inſtance to the adventitious benefits which have occaſionally ariſen from this opinion, which, notwithſtanding, cannot be too earneſtly diſcouraged, as one pregnant with the greateſt miſchief to ſociety; for ſcarcely can any idea be entertained more repugnant to every impreſſion of moral juſtice, than that the confeſſion of ſins, when it is paſt the power of the criminal to repeat them, can atone for a whole life ſpent in their commiſſion.

One morning, then, after Dawkins had paſſed a very unquiet night, while the fever of his mind raged with even greater fury than that which was conſuming his body, he

begged that Colonel Rainsford and Mrs. Meadows might be ſent for, as he felt himſelf dying, and wiſhed to eaſe his parting ſoul of a mighty burthen, by laying open to them the whole extent of his crimes. Perhaps he might be farther influenced to this confeſſion by learning that Weymar and Ooſhawn were both ſo far recovered that their depoſitions againſt himſelf were about to be taken; and as ſilence could now, therefore, avail him little, it appeared better to take his ſtory into his own hands than leave it entirely to others, who certainly would have no inclination to palliate, if they did not aggravate, the villainies which they muſt neceſſarily relate.

But the divine had not determined on breaking ſilence till too late to take the lead of his colleague in iniquity in their joint expoſure to the world; for at the time when he requeſted that Rainsford might be ſent for, that gentleman was attending at the examination of Weymar, and was thus poſſeſſed of the great outline of Dawkins's machinations before he could commence their developement himſelf. Not but that each had his peculiar catalogue

of

of crimes to unfold, as well as thoſe which were common to both; but as it is not neceſſary to detail them ſeparately, we ſhall unite them, in order to avoid prolixity, beginning with Dawkins's connection with Weymar, which began ſoon after the death of Fanny Warren.

The ſame motives which carried Dawkins over to India, a fear of the detection of fraudulent practices in England, had, ſome years before, impelled Weymar thither. With fates and minds ſo ſimilar, it was not ſurpriſing that Chance having thrown them in each other's way, they ſhould ſoon enter into the firmeſt and cloſeſt alliance for preying on their fellow-creatures; and they ſwore ſolemnly to each other, to miſs no opportunity with which they might be preſented for this purpoſe. When, therefore, they heard of Charles Meadows's intended expedition to conſult the derviſe, they thought the plan ſo wild and romantic, that it might probably be productive of extraordinary circumſtances, which, in the hands of perſons of their talents, might be turned to advantage, and they reſolved to fol-

low him to Chinſura, and watch the progreſs of the adventure.

On Benington's departure, of whom Dawkins ſtood conſiderably in awe, he began to be very aſſiduous about Charles, offering him his ſervices with the moſt hypocritical cant of ſympathy in his ſufferings, and wiſhes to alleviate them, hoping by this means to get him completely into his power, while at the ſame time, in order to leave the coaſt as clear to himſelf as poſſible, he diſpoſed of poor Ooſhawn in the manner already related. But ſuch was Charles's deteſtation of him, and ſatisfaction with Jeipal's kindneſs and attention, that he ſpurned all Dawkins's advances, and reſigned himſelf wholly to the management of his new friend, even conſenting to accompany him to his own habitation when he was no longer wanted at Chinſura.

Dawkins and Weymar were ſufficiently mortified when they ſaw him thus eſcape from their machinations, and had nearly given up all hope of advantage from that quarter, when ſeveral weeks after, as the latter was going up the river, he met with the derviſe, who related to him

him the tragical end of his gueſt, exactly as Dawkins afterwards related it to Mrs. Meadows. Weymar was immediately ſtruck with the idea, that if the manner of Charles's death ſhould remain a ſecret, they might make their own uſe of it, and he accordingly undertook to convey the intelligence to the friends of the deceaſed at Calcutta, intending to embelliſh it with ſuch circumſtances as might beſt ſuit himſelf and his aſſociate.

After much conſultation, it was determined to forge the bond and ſtory upon which Weymar founded his claim to a part of Charles's property. To effect this, Dawkins had again recourſe to the art which we have already more than once ſeen him practiſe but too ſucceſsfully, that of imitating the hand-writing of others; and from the intercepted letters in his poſſeſſion he had gained ſuch a thorough knowledge of our hero's, that it was impoſſible the forgery ſhould be detected. In the plunder which by this means they hoped to acquire, they were by agreement to be equal ſharers.

But Dawkins ſtopped not here. His principle though life had been, never to leave his

bow with but one ſtring if it were poſſible to furniſh it with a ſecond, and he began to revolve in his mind whether it might not be an eaſy matter for him to ſecure the entire profits of this villainy to himſelf.

Could this be done, he had no tender ſcruples with regard to his colleague, but without heſitation would have uſed him merely as a ladder for his own advancement, and kicked him away as ſoon as he was arrived at the end he propoſed. To ſhare ten thouſand pounds with Weymar was but a paltry object; but to gain Amelia herſelf with the whole fortune which her Huſband had bequeathed, was indeed one worthy his attention. For this purpoſe, he reflected whether by going over to England, and revealing the forgery, the whole criminality of which he could eaſily turn over to Weymar, he might not raiſe himſelf ſuch an intereſt in her heart, as to incline her in time to lend a favourable ear to his paſſion. On this attempt he had nearly reſolved, nay, had in his own mind actually fixed the time for his departure, when he was thunderſtruck by hearing that Mrs Meadows was arrived in India.

Here

Here was an effectual overthrow indeed to this deep-laid ſcheme; for he had too much diſcernment not to ſee that the diſcovery which might have been perfectly ſafe in England, would be highly hazardous at Calcutta, where Weymar was on the ſpot to re-criminate. Thus was he obliged entirely to relinquiſh a project which he thought was one of the fineſt he had ever conceived, and to have recourſe only to the hackneyed methods of ſighs, entreaties, and attentions, to gain the heart of his miſtreſs. Theſe he eſſayed for a while; but finding them of no avail, he determined to try what threats would do, and proceeded to terrify her with the idea of the total loſs of her own and her child's property, truſting that by involving both, he had perfectly ſecured his point.

His aſtoniſhment was extreme when he found her alike invulnerable againſt terror as againſt flattery; and there were moments when, loſt in admiration of ſo much magnanimity and firmneſs of character, he had almoſt reſolved not to urge his perſecution farther. But a very little reflection convinced him that to retreat

was impoſſible, he had involved himſelf ſo far that he muſt ruſh on at all hazards; and the only queſtion left was, whether to content himſelf with defrauding her of the ſum of which he could be ſecure, or to perſevere in the purſuit of herſelf as well as of her property.

On this alternative he was not long in deciding. His late interviews with her had revived, with added force, the paſſion which her beauty originally excited, and to poſſeſs her was become ſcarcely leſs his object than to procure a ſupply for his pecuniary neceſſities. An idea then ſuggeſted itſelf, that by a modification of his original plan of revealing the forgery, he might ſtill bring it into action, and employ it in furthering his ſuit. He therefore prevailed on Weymar to conſent to his acting the farce of remorſe for his offences, and diſcovering the fraud practiſed with regard to the bond, on which the Attorney was to abſent himſelf from Calcutta, under a promiſe from Dawkins that, on his marriage, he ſhould receive the whole ten thouſand pounds, inſtead of the five which he was to gain, had the bond been ſupported.

When

When this project failed like the former, Dawkins was driven almoſt to deſperation, and Weymar began to be very clamorous with him, curſing his inſatiable avarice, and ſilly purſuit of beauty, which in him was perfectly contemptible. Nor could he help venting ſome imprecations on himſelf for relinquiſhing the certainty of five thouſand pounds to run after a ſhadow; concluding, that unleſs Dawkins's marriage was ſpeedily ſettled, and the ten thouſand pounds which had been ſtipulated paid him, he muſt have recourſe on his part to the advantages held out by diſcovery.

Thus beſet, the divine ſcarcely knew which way to turn, or what ſcheme to purſue next; and, at length, he thought of decoying Mrs. Meadows into meeting him at a houſe of ill fame, when he conceived ſhe could not poſſibly refuſe the reparation he ſhould offer for her ruined character. It may be judged then, what muſt have been his diſappointment, what the mortified ſtate of his mind, when he found this project as abortive as all the reſt, and himſelf not only croſſed eternally in his paſſion for the woman, but all his hopes cruſhed of ever being

ing able to poſſeſs himſelf of her fortune! he was half frantic with rage and deſpair; he knew not how to raiſe money by any means whatever; want ſtared him in the face; while he lived in daily terror of Weymar's arrival at Calcutta, to carry his threats of diſcovery into execution.

And at length Weymar, who had been for ſome time at Patna, came down to Calcutta for this purpoſe; but reſolving to ſee Dawkins before he made the diſcloſure, he entered the town towards midnight, and went to the houſe where the divine uſually took up his reſidence; but he was not then at home, he had indeed been abſent three or four days, nor was it known whither he was gone, or when he might return.

Weymar, at a loſs what courſe to purſue, retired to the wood, there to meditate unobſerved on his future plans; and there, at early morning, he and Ooſhawn accidentally met. The poor Hindoo, at ſight of his perſecutor, endeavoured to ſlide away and conceal himſelf, but the ferocious attorney had ſeen and recognized him, nor would ſuffer him to eſcape. Irritated at finding ſo dangerous a man returned

returned to that place, when he thought himſelf ſo ſecured againſt his re-appearance,—irritated at not having ſeen Dawkins,—perplexed between the hope of reward for betraying his aſſociate, and the fear, leſt, in ſo doing, he might alſo inculpate himſelf, his mind was wrought up to that pitch of ſavage fury, which could "*do the bittereſt buſineſs*," and ſeizing the poor fellow by the arm, he drew out a large knife, which he plunged into his ſide, when giving a violent ſhriek, he fell ſenſeleſs to the ground.

The noiſe of his ſhriek drew Dawkins (who had only been wandering about in the neighbourhood of Calcutta, from not knowing what to do, or whither to go, and had paſſed the night in the wood) to the ſpot whence it iſſued. High words immediately aroſe between him and Weymar, when the latter ſtooping to draw out the knife from the wounded Ooſhawn, as Dawkins ſuppoſed to make uſe of it againſt him, he anticipated the ſtroke, by giving the attorney a violent blow on the temple, which felled him inſtantly to the ground, and deprived him of his ſenſes.

When

When Dawkins beheld the two bodies apparently liſeleſs before him, he thought it expedient, for his own ſafety, to eſcape from the place as faſt as poſſible, and he therefore left them to their fate, not ſorry to be rid of ſo troubleſome a perſonage as Weymar; but in departing, inſtead of abandoning *them* to their fate, he ultimately met his own.

In all the above circumſtances, the confeſſions of the colleagues were perfectly agreed; but as Weymar had thrown out hints, that he knew of Charles Meadows's being alive at Bombay long after the reported time of his death, of which Dawkins made not the leaſt mention, Rainsford addreſſed the latter—— "But yet, Sir, you have not told all;—you ſpeak as if you really ſuppoſe that Mr. Meadows was murdered at the derviſe's habitation —but in vain would you ſeek to trifle with us, we know that you are better informed on that ſubject, that you cannot be ignorant that he was ſeen at Bombay more than a year after that time,—tell us, therefore, all his fate, for no one can doubt of your being privy to every part of it."

"How!

"How!—what do you ſay, Colonel Rainsford?—alive long after?—could that poſſibly be?—what then became of him?"

"Do not pretend to aſk that of me, when you know the ſtory ſo much better than I do, and I muſt look to you for information."

"No, on the faith of a dying man, to whom concealment or evaſion would be alike unavailing, I aſſure you, that I am totally at a loſs to conjecture to what it is you allude. I can ſafely ſwear, that I believed Mr. Meadows to be murdered, as Weymar reported to me from the derviſe; nay, farther, I am convinced that Weymar himſelf had the ſame belief. Vile as we have both been, yet, if the ſtory of the murder was not true, it is a falſhood of which *we* are innocent, 'tis by the derviſe alone you are in this inſtance deceived."

"What am I to think of this?—the ſolemn adjuration you have uttered, ought to preclude me from doubting your veracity, yet you ſay that you are convinced Weymar has the ſame belief as yourſelf, whereas he has owned ſeeing Mr. Meadows alive little more than a year ago."

Dawkins

Dawkins looked all aſtoniſhment. "How," ſaid he, "and have I then been the dupe of a greater villain than myſelf?—and can he dare to aſſert that I knew of Mr. Meadows's being alive at the time in queſtion?"

"No, he did not aſſert that.—I was attending his confeſſion when I was ſent for to you, but I had only partially heard his ſtory, in which he owned the knowledge of this circumſtance himſelf, and I therefore concluded that you could be no ſtranger to it."

"And what then is become of Mr. Meadows?—Would to God that I could now ſee him, and implore his forgiveneſs, that my peace being made here with him, I might have the leſs to dread hereafter."

"He is not now alive.—It is true that he was ſo, long after you ſuppoſed him dead; he was ſeen both by Weymar and Winterton at Bombay, ſeen for a moment and no more. He threw himſelf into the ſea there in a fit of phrenzy."

"And all this Weymar knew?"

"So far he had owned before I left him; more

more ſeemed behind untold, but he was then too much exhauſted to proceed."

"Oh for the love of God, Colonel, go back to him and learn all! Let me know how far I who ſtrove to dupe all the world, have been a dupe myſelf."

Rainsford went back to Weymar; he found him almoſt in the laſt agonies; he queſtioned him farther about his ſeeing Charles at Bombay, when he told him that he met him at the Governor's houſe, nor could deſcribe how great was his aſtoniſhment when he ſaw him enter the room; he thought he beheld a ſpirit returned from the dead! "But dangerous as he was to me," ſaid the Attorney, "I began immediately to plan how I might beſt get him out of the way, as I dreaded nothing ſo much as his re-appearance at Calcutta, whither I underſtood it to be his intention to go by the next ſhip that ſhould ſail. I knew there was no way in which I could wound him ſo deeply as in his love for his wife, and I reſolved to make my attack on that vulnerable part."—Weymar had with difficulty proceeded thus far, it was uttered in broken ſentences, but here

here his voice failed entirely, a convulſion ſeized him, and in a few minutes he expired, and with him the remainder of his unfiniſhed ſtory.

But enough was revealed to convince his auditors that ſome villainy which he had practiſed, had wrought up his victim to the pitch of phrenzy which brought on his cataſtrophe. His reaſon for never owning this circumſtance to Dawkins is probably to be found in the general diſtruſt which aſſociates in guilt always feel towards each other, which induced an apprehenſion that ſhould this be known to the Divine, he might make his own advantage of it, whereas if any were to be made, the Attorney wiſhed to keep it all to himſelf.

Still was Charles's fate enveloped in a cloud of myſtery; for by the aſtoniſhment Weymar expreſſed at ſeeing him at Bombay, it appeared that he too ſuppoſed him dead. Thus ſuſpicion grew ſtrong againſt Jeipal, that he muſt have played ſome diſhoneſt part in the ſtory he told of the murder; yet when queſtioned on the ſubject by Benington and Mrs. Meadows, there was ſuch an artleſs ſimplicity in his

his manner, and an appearance of ſuch firm belief in the truth of what he related, united with ſuch deep regret for the loſs of a man who had gained ſo much on his affections, that it ſeemed altogether unjuſt to ſuſpect him of any deceit or culpability. Could it then be poſſible that Charles had voluntarily abſented himſelf from the Derviſe, and by ſome artifice impoſed a belief on him that he was murdered? — But for what purpoſe could this have been done? — beſides frankneſs and openneſs were ſo much his leading characteriſtics, that it ſeemed impoſſible he could have been guilty of ſuch duplicity. On the whole, therefore, though conſiderable diſcoveries were made, it was obvious that much of his ſtory was ſtill unknown, and would probably remain ſo, as the only lips which could reveal the whole, were ſealed in eternal ſilence.

Dawkins's mind ſeemed for a ſhort time ſomewhat relieved by the confeſſion he had made; but in proportion as the danger from his wound, and conſequent fever encreaſed, his terrors encreaſed alſo, and he was frequently heard in the wildeſt paroxyoms of anguiſh, to

invoke

invoke phrenzy to come and reſcue him from the recollection of ſcenes which harrowed up his ſoul. But phrenzy came not—he remained to his laſt moments awake, tremblingly awake, to the bittereſt ſtings of remorſe for the paſt, and terrors for the future. He ſtrove to pray to the God whoſe thunders he ſaw in idea armed againſt him, but he ſtrove in vain. —He began an ejaculation, but horror froze his tongue, and prevented his proceeding—he had ſhewn no mercy to his fellow creatures while on earth, and how could he dare to aſk that for himſelf, which he uniformly denied to others.—He would fain have entreated pardon of Mrs. Meadows, but crimes like his were too mighty for even ſuch a heart as her's to pardon. He called to the attendants around to ſtab him at once, and put an end to his torments, but who could dare comply with his requeſt?—no, he was compelled to wait till exhauſted nature ſtruck the ſtroke, when he breathed out his ſoul in a ſigh for annihilation, for which he yet wiſhed rather than dared to hope.

Such was the end of Dawkins's career on earth,

earth, ere he had fairly numbered out half his days. With talents ſuch as he poſſeſſed, what an ornament might he have proved to ſociety, had he but taken half the pains to render himſelf uſeful to mankind, that he did to prove their curſe and their bane. Probably, at his outſet, he had no idea of the lengths of wickedneſs to which in time he ſhould be led; but let no one ſuppoſe that he can fix the boundary beyond which he will not paſs in the labyrinth of villainy, but meaſure back his ſteps again. In that labyrinth there is ſcarcely a poſſibility of making a retrograde motion, one crime is but a prelude to a ſecond, which muſt inevitably lead on to others, till deeds which made us ſhudder when viewed at a diſtance, becoming familiarized, are dreaded no longer, and we haſten onward till ſome ſudden unforeſeen ruin falls on and cruſhes us, when we ſink into the gulph of infamy amidſt the ſcorn and execrations of the multitude, and the pity of the reflecting and philoſophical few.

CHAPTER

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER VII.

But whither went his soul, let such relate
Who search the secrets of the future state:
Divines can say but what themselves believe,
Strong proof they have, but not demonstrative:
For were all plain, then all sides muſt agree,
And faith itself be lost in certainty.
To live uprightly then is surely best,
To ſave ourselves and not to damn the rest.
The soul of Arcite went where heathens' go,
Who better live than we, though less they know.

DRYDEN.

OOSHAWN, meantime, recovered ſlowly of his wound, and ſoon began to ſigh for the aid of his old friend the Derviſe, which was no ſooner known to Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford, and Mrs. Meadows, than they determined immediately to accompany him thither. The latter had a ſtrong wiſh for the voyage,

voyage, in hopes that by another viſit ſhe might gain farther inſight into the ſtrange ſtory which had lately come to light, relative to her huſband; and the two former wiſhed much to viſit a ſpot, the deſcription of which ſo much charmed them.

To the cell, therefore, they ſteered their courſe. On entering the chaſm, a more than uſual ſtillneſs ſeemed to reign around, as if nature were at one great univerſal pauſe:—it was ſublime, it was impreſſive. They looked around for the lonely inhabitant of this paradiſaical abode,—they ſaw him not;—they approached the banyan, under the ſhade of which was his uſual place of meditation; the banyan's circling ſhade remained, but the derviſe reſted not under its cooling and luxuriant branches. "Ah! he is no more," ſaid Amelia, as ſhe wiped away a tear of ſenſibility which ſtarted into her eye.

They proceeded on to his hut, they entered it, and beheld the venerable man ſtretched on his leafy couch, and evidently haſtening to that conſummation of fate, to which the derviſe, like the reſt of mankind, "*muſt come at laſt.*"

laſt." Amelia approached him; "My father," ſhe ſaid, — he opened his eyes, and caſt on her a feeble glance, but no ſooner perceived who addreſſed him, than he made an effort to riſe up, which, with the aſſiſtance of his gueſts, he accompliſhed.

"Ah, my child!" he ſaid to Amelia, "the great God, the immortal Brahma, be praiſed that I ſee you again. I wanted the preſence of a friend; I prayed to him to ſend one, and behold whom, in his goodneſs, he hath granted me. Tell me what has now brought you hither, and tell it quickly, for life ebbs apace."

"Oh, father!" ſhe anſwered, "I came again to queſtion you about my unfortunate huſband. Did he really die here, or did he not rather leave you voluntarily?"

"Oh no, truſt me, he died here, died as I related to you; I did not indeed ſee his murdered body, but I am as much convinced of his death as if I had. Why have you any doubts about it?"

"Becauſe I have lately ſeen a man who declares, that he put an end to his own life at Bombay,

Bombay, a long time after he was miſſing from your cell."

"Believe him not, my child. Doſt thou think, that if he had been alive ſo long, the great God whom I ſerve, the mighty Brahma, that bright emanation from the all-bright, all-glorious Power who rules the world, — doſt thou think that Brahma would have ſuffered me to believe him dead, nor through his divine power revealed to me in dream or viſion, where, or in what condition he might be? — I prayed to Brahma inceſſantly for his recovery, and he granted it to my prayers; I ſought to convert him to our true faith, but he was too much darkened with European errors, to bear the divine light of thoſe truths I would have taught him, and I fear that Brahma therefore grew wroth, and ſent the angel of deſtruction to ſweep him from off the face of the earth. Oh that his eyes had but been opened! oh that he had yet been here! that I might now leave him as ſucceſſor to my treaſure, to the healing treaſure with which I have been bleſſed by holy Brahma!"

Amelia was deeply affected with the earneſt

and emphatic manner in which the dying man expreſſed his wiſhes, and the affection he thus retained for her huſband even in his laſt moments. "Alas!" ſhe ſaid, "when will my ſoul be at eaſe?—when ſhall I know the fate of my Charles, with a certainty that ſhall preclude all doubt?"

"Ah, and do you doubt ſtill, then, my child? pray to Brahma, and he will enlighten you.—But what ſays my ſon there," he added, looking at Ooſhawn, "thou haſt faith in our divine Being, thou wert once an attendant on my darling ſon, but thou did'ſt leave him;—what would'ſt thou aſk now!"

"Your medicinal aid," ſaid Ooſhawn. "Like him I am wounded, and wounded for no other offence than having been known to him."

"Alas!" returned the derviſe, "and I am called into the preſence of Brahma, when I am wanted here on earth!—Yet his will be done. But, my ſon, will you take poſſeſſion of my habitation when I am gone? will you cultivate the wond'rous herb? will you adminiſter to the wants of your fellow-creatures? I will leave you my tablets, whereon is inſcribed the methods

thods I have practiſed in cultivating and applying my medicine, and pray, with my laſt breath, that the great God will bleſs you, even as he bleſſed me, vouchſafing the ſame powers to the herb, for your ſake, with which he endowed it for mine."

Ooſhawn's eyes gliſtened with rapture at the propoſal, and he cried, "Praiſed be Brahma, oh, holy Father, who has inſpired thee with this thought! praiſed be his name throughout the world, that he will thus ſhew favour to his poor ſervant."

"Well, then," ſaid the derviſe, "carry me, and lay me by our ſacred river, 'tis all the care that remains to me on earth; and as the holy wave ſhall ſweep me from your ſight, I will pray for bleſſings on you. Haſte, leſt my pulſe ceaſe to beat ere its banks can be reached!"

They raiſed him from his couch, they bore him to the water-ſide, and when they laid him down, he raiſed his hands in token of ſatisfaction, when a wave came, and ſwept him from their ſight.

Ooſhawn ſoon ſettled himſelf in his new

habitation, and by applying to the medicinal herb, found his health mend apace. Colonel and Mrs. Rainsford, Mrs. Meadows, and Indamora, ſtayed with him a fortnight, which they ſpent in exploring the adjacent country, and by that time the period drawing near when the return of the courier, which was to decide Rainsford's fate, was expected, they returned back to Eden.

As this expectation encreaſed, ſo much the more did the public anxiety encreaſe, every one looking eagerly for the tidings he might bring, which as all wiſhed, all expected, would be favourable. But how was expectation diſappointed, what a gloom was thrown over the whole city, when, at laſt, he did arrive, charged with a confirmation of the ſentence of the court-martial. The aſtoniſhment excited by this deciſion was not to be deſcribed, and as it was generally ſuppoſed that the ſecond courier muſt have reached England before this could have left it, the univerſal cry was, "Whither can the juſtice of the Court of Directors be flown?"

The

The Governor was not leſs aſtoniſhed than the reſt, but what could that avail?—the deciſion was abſolute to degrade Rainsford, and beſtow his commiſſion as Colonel, and the poſt to which he had lately been ſo honourably raiſed, on another perſon named by the Directors; nor could he do other than comply with theſe commands. He, however, accompanied the enforcement of the ſentence with a letter, expreſſive of the deepeſt regret, that his office conſtrained him to execute a decree ſo repugnant both to his inclination and judgment. He ſaid, that he ſhould never ceaſe to lament the unfortunate chain of circumſtances which had led to this cataſtrophe, and deprived the Eaſt-India Company of the ſervices of an officer, who had uniformly been an ornament to his profeſſion, and ſerved them with a fidelity, an integrity, and a zeal, which they would not eaſily find again united in the ſame perſon; adding, in concluſion, "and it ſhall always be my care, my dear *Sir*, for *Colonel* I muſt no longer call you, to make it known as my opinion,' that diſgrace has been

inflicted where reward ought to have been beſtowed, and to ſhew how much I regret the miſunderſtanding which has led your employers to be guilty of ſo flagrant an act of injuſtice."

CHAPTER

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER XIV.

And why should Virtue dread the frowns of Fate?
Her's, what no wealth can win, no power create!
A little world of clear and cloudless day,
Nor wreck'd by storms, nor moulder'd by decay:
A world with Memory's ceaseless sun-shine blest,
The home of Happiness—an honest breast.

PLEASURES OF MEMORY.

RAINSFORD bore this ſtroke, ſo undeſerved on his part, with the ſame dignified compoſure which had uniformly marked his character; he felt, that as it was perfectly undeſerved, ſo it could not reflect any diſgrace upon him; and though he was deprived of *ideal* conſequence in the world, he retained all that could give him *real* conſequence, in having preſerved an unblemiſhed honour and untainted integrity. Nor was this, though the

higheſt comfort a man can poſſeſs, the only one remaining to him, he muſt live in leſs ſplendour, it was true, but he had a fortune equal to procuring him every comfort, and even every luxury of life, which a reaſonable man could deſire, and perhaps, indeed, was only about to exchange a life of *factitious* for a life of *ſolid* happineſs. Mrs. Rainsford too preſerved a like dignity of deportment; and both, by this noble equanimity of temper, added another uſeful leſſon to the world, that external honours are of ſmall importance when compared with the inward ſerenity ariſing from conſcious rectitude.

But ſuch was not the ſituation of Mr. and Mrs. Macdonnel. They were ſtaying at Eden at the time that the fatal ſentence arrived; and when Cecilia heard it, wild with the horrible feelings which it excited in her boſom, ſhe clung around Mrs. Rainsford, declaring that ſhe would go herſelf immediately to England, and never ceaſe importuning the Directors till they had reverſed their decree, and reſtored the Colonel to his honours; and in the agitation of her mind, they had the extremeſt difficulty; nor indeed, without force, were able to reſtrain

ſtrain her from going inſtantly to Calcutta, under the idea of carrying this ſcheme into execution. Macdonnel too, whoſe natural fierceneſs had undergone a ſevere chaſtiſement in the chain of evils which he had ſeen brought on by his haſty conduct, was now ſoftened down to a degree of contrition and humiliation which nothing, perhaps, but events ſo ſtriking, and brought ſo home to his own feelings, could have produced. And while this raſh and imprudent couple had been the cauſe of ſo much injury to their beſt friends, thoſe very friends they had injured were the only perſons to whom, in this ſtate of wretchedneſs, they could look up for condolence and ſympathy.

Macdonnel, indeed, felt that he had not only deeply injured Rainsford, but had alſo been his own worſt enemy, in depriving himſelf of a powerful friend, who was able to advance him rapidly in life, by means of the intereſt his ſtation gave him; and he was now reduced to placing his ſole hope of advancement in his own induſtry and exertions. And every one knows, under the preſent ſyſtem,

whether of the two, a man's own efforts, or the intereſt of a friend in power, is likely to raiſe him moſt rapidly to rank and fortune.

It now only remained for Mr. and Mrs. Rainsford to ſettle their affairs in India with all poſſible expedition, in order to carry into effect the determination they had ſometime before made, of returning to England in caſe of the preſent deciſion. Eden, therefore, where, when they purchaſed it, they had looked forwards to ſpending many years of happineſs; but where, during the ſhort time it had been in their poſſeſſion, they had experienced little elſe but vexation, was once again to be ſold, and it found an immediate purchaſer in the officer who ſucceeded to Rainsford's command.

This ſale was juſt completed, and the ſucceſſor fully eſtabliſhed in the late Colonel's fallen honours, when the ſecond meſſenger arrived from England, bringing diſpatches from the Company, by which they reſcinded their former reſolution in conſequence of the explanation of Rainsford's conduct ſubſequently received, and decreed that he ſhould be

be continued in his ſtation. The tranſports excited by the preſent decree, were in proportion with the diſſatisfaction created by the former; but thoſe tranſports were ſoon again overthrown, on Rainsford's declining to reſume his honours. He urged, that his acceptance of them was never his own wiſh; and ſince another muſt now be degraded to make way for his reſtoration, that was a ſtep to which he was reſolute never to be acceſſary. Thus this event made no alteration in his plans, only added a ſtill ſtronger teſtimony to his diſgrace being unmerited; and he proceeded in his preparations for leaving India.

Such had been the agitated ſtate of Cecilia's mind all this time, that Mr. and Mrs. Rainsford dreaded the moment of their departure on her account, and had cautiouſly concealed from her when it was to take place. They had been at Mrs. Meadows's houſe from the time of their leaving Eden, and Captain and Mrs. Yelverton, and the Macdonnels, had ſcarcely ever been abſent from them. The Captain and Zelinda purpoſed attending their friends to the boat, but Macdonnel was to

ſtay

ſtay and amuſe his wife till they ſhould be on board the ſhip and out of her reach.

But on the morning of their departure, as the hour approached, which he knew was to carry the illuſtrious fugitives from the ſhore, the Lieutenant found himſelf ſo much overcome by his own feelings, that he dreaded leſt Cecilia ſhould ſuſpect, from his manner, that all was not right, and he ſent for Benington to ſtay with her while he himſelf ſhould go to the water-ſide and ſee the boat off. He walked out alone,—thrice he turned his ſteps towards the ſpot where he knew the boat to be in waiting; but often as he lifted up his eyes and beheld the ſhip riding at anchor at a diſtance, his heart ſickened within him, and much as he wiſhed to go to the ſhore, he ſhrunk back again as ſoon as he made the attempt, till, at length, compelled to relinquiſh it, he returned homewards. To add to the horror of his feelings, as he approached his own door, he beheld Cecilia ruſh out, with her hair diſhevelled, her countenance pale and wild, and her cloaths all diſordered with ſtruggling to break looſe from thoſe who held her;

and

and darting forwards, fly towards the place which he had, in vain, endeavoured to reach; but now that a more powerful ſtimulus was added, and time for reflection denied him, he inſtantly flew thither in purſuit of her.

Having perceived Macdonnel more than uſually uneaſy that morning, finding that he was gone out, and that Benington ſat converſing with her in a manner very unuſual for him, Cecilia began to ſuſpect the truth, and riſing up haſtily, made her way, in a moment, to the houſe-door, when the merchant perceiving her intention ſtrove to retain her, but ſhe ſoon broke from his hold, and ruſhed out as above deſcribed.

She reached the ſhore at the moment when Mrs. Rainsford was taking leave of her ſurrounding friends. As ſhe was about to ſtep into the boat, Cecilia threw her arms around her neck, and vowed that ſhe would hang there for ever, nor ſuffer herſelf to be ſeparated from her by any power on earth. Mrs. Rainsford, though almoſt overcome by ſo affecting a ſcene, and by the agonies in which ſhe beheld one who had been ſo dear to her; yet

yet uſed her utmoſt endeavours to ſooth and conſole her, but in vain, till at laſt ſhe was obliged to entreat Captain Stanley and Yelverton to carry her off by force. This they with difficulty accompliſhed; and when Cecilia found herſelf torn away, ſhe gave a violent heart-piercing ſhriek, and fell ſenſeleſs into their arms.

Mrs. Yelverton all this time ſtood weeping by the ſide of Mrs. Rainsford; and when, at length, ſhe beheld her freed from the frantic Cecilia, ſhe took her hand, and gently preſſed it to her lips, with a look of the ſweeteſt and tendereſt expreſſion; then turning to Mrs. Meadows and Indamora, ſhe did the like by them, and was ſilently withdrawing, when Rainsford caught her in his arms, and after kiſſing her affectionately, ſuffered her to proceed. Then handing his wife and Mrs. Meadows into the boat, he took Indamora in his arms and followed them, attended by Winterton, and the nurſe with his own child, and they were, in a ſhort time, ſafe on board the ſhip.

Nor were thoſe, already noticed, the only perſons

perſons who ſaw their departure with regret. The contagion of ſorrow was ſpread wide, and the beach was crowded with a train of men, women, and children, lamenting the loſs of benevolence and hoſpitality, ſo juſtly eſteemed and reſpected, and ſo deeply felt by all who were in any way their dependents. Nay, even thoſe in the higher walks of life, who had ſo religiouſly obſerved all the etiquettes which they have eſtabliſhed to themſelves, and ſhunned Mr. and Mrs. Rainsford at the firſt moment, when the clouds of adverſity began to darken the atmoſphere around them, now, unable to reſiſt the feelings of nature, joined the general voice of regret: and as the oars daſhed into the water, anſwered every ſtroke with a tear, not of form only, but proceeding from the heart.

It was a long time after Cecilia was carried home before her ſenſes returned; nor did ſhe then retain them for any length of time, but for the greateſt part of the day only recovered from one fit to relapſe into another. But ſtorms ſo violent cannot be laſting; and this, which had wrought up her feelings to ſuch a

pitch

pitch of agitation, gave way, after a while, to calmer ſorrow, which time at length medicined into a degree of cheerfulneſs, ſtill mixed with ſenſations of the moſt tender and affecting regret for the part ſhe had acted, and the loſs ſhe had thereby ſuſtained. Macdonnel too, awakened by the cataſtrophe, in which he had been ſo deeply concerned, to a train of ſolemn and ſerious reflection, entered on a ſevere retroſpect of his paſt life, which he ſoon conſidered with regret and diſguſt, and formed a fixed reſolution to avoid the like in future. The diſcipline, indeed, which this couple had undergone was ſevere, but it proved ſalutary, ſince it exhibited to them, in the moſt impreſſive manner, the fatal effects of levity and imprudence in the firſt inſtance, and of intemperate and diſorderly paſſion in the laſt; and taught them, in their remaining progreſs through life, to ſteer clear both of the rock and the whirlpool, from which they had been in ſuch imminent peril. For ſome time they remained in almoſt total ſolitude, through a horror of appearing in company; but at laſt returned to the world, much more

valuable

valuable members of ſociety, and paſſed the reſt of their days in a ſtate of credit and reſpectability.

To Zelinda too, though not chargeable with guilt in the affair, the departure of Mr. and Mrs. Rainsford was a ſtroke to which ſhe was long unable, in any degree, to reconcile herſelf; and ſhe muſt have been ungrateful indeed had ſhe not felt deeply a ſeparation from perſons ſo worthy of eſteem, and to whom ſhe owed ſuch great obligations. But with her leſſer, as well as with Cecilia's greater griefs, time effected what time only can and ſeldom fails to effect, a perfect cure, eſpecially where, as in her caſe, ſorrow is unaccompanied with ſelf-reproach. To her huſband, who was not altogether ſo blameleſs as herſelf, the leſſon thus exhibited, proved, as well as to Mr. and Mrs. Macdonnel, not wholly unprofitable, ſince it inſtructed him to look beyond the ſurface of things ere he formed a judgment upon them, and to be careful, in future, not haſtily to ſtir up paſſions, which, when rouſed, would ruſh headlong on to the deſtruction of whatever might fall in their way.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER XV.

——— A seat where gods might dwell,
Or wander with delight, and love to haunt
Her sacred shades.

MILTON.

WE muſt now return once more to England, and Mr. and Mrs. Anneſley, in order to take a haſty view of the impreſſion made on them by the above tranſactions.

The affair of Cecilia's marriage affected them no otherwiſe at firſt than with deep regret; they cenſured no one, not even the young lady herſelf, whoſe youth and inexperience they conſidered as a great extenuation of her conduct, and entitling her to pity rather than cenſure. If blame was imputable any where, they were candid enough to acknowledge that it was to themſelves, not her, for

for having ſo imprudently ſuffered that youth and inexperience to be launched into an ocean of temptation.

But when Captain Anneſley firſt received an ill impreſſion of Rainsford's conduct in that affair, he wrote in a great hurry to his brother in England, ſtating what he had heard, with very ſevere animadverſions upon it, and concluded his letter with ſaying, that Rainsford appeared to have behaved ſo ill with regard to his niece, that he thought himſelf bound to call him to account, and was going to Calcutta for that purpoſe.

This letter gave Anneſley no ſmall ſhare of uneaſineſs; yet ſtill he heſitated in believing Rainsford ſo cenſurable as the Captain ſeemed to conſider him, becauſe it was by no means obvious what could induce the preference he was repreſented to have given to Macdonnel above Morriſon. Intereſt it could not be, for Rainsford, in his high ſtation, could not look to a perſon ſo much inferior in rank and influence for any ſupport to his intereſt; and he had written with ſo much pleaſure to announce the intended marriage with Morriſon,

ſon, and ſo much regret when it was at an end, that he muſt be an hypocrite indeed if he had any ſhare in preventing the one, or promoting the other. On the whole, Anneſley waited to hear more before he could poſſibly condemn a man of whoſe honour and integrity he had always entertained ſo high an opinion.

But how was he horror-ſtricken when, a very ſhort time after the receipt of his brother's letter, he heard of the arrival of the meſſenger, with the particulars of Rainsford's trial and ſentence. Such a ſtory as that unfolded was enough to drive a parent to diſtraction, and ſcarcely left him power to reaſon on the ſubject. Indeed, had that power remained in its fulleſt force, it would not have led to diſcrediting the ſtory, but rather the contrary, as circumſtantial proof of a private nature, only ſeemed to corroborate the public teſtimonies of guilt brought forward againſt Rainsford. Had he or Cecilia had any thing to urge in their defence, could it be doubted that by letter they would have attempted an explanation of their conduct; and as this was

not

not done by either, the fair inference was, that conſcious guilt was too powerful to permit any endeavour at palliation. The truth was, that the meſſenger not coming immediately from Calcutta, but from the then quarters of the Governor-General, many miles diſtant, precluded the poſſibility of Rainsford's writing; but this Anneſley could not know, and had therefore ſufficient ground for his reaſoning.

In ſo cruel a ſituation, Anneſley was perplexed to the laſt degree to determine how to proceed. He could not bear the idea of remaining, or even appearing to remain, an unconcerned ſpectator of the cruel and degraded ſituation to which a beloved daughter was reduced, and he reſolved to go himſelf to India, and ſee what was to be done towards reclaiming his loſt child, whom his imagination repreſented as abandoned by the world, and ſinking into the loweſt depths of ſhame and infamy.

He took a paſſage therefore in the Aurora packet, which was about to ſail for Bengal, in which he embarked a few days after, and had

juſt

juſt cleared the coaſt of England when the ſecond courier from India arrived, bringing the juſtification of Rainsford, but too late to prevent his departure.

The Aurora met with ſeveral very heavy gales in her paſſage to the Cape, which made the voyage very tedious; and juſt before its arrival there, Anneſley was ſeized with a fever and pleuriſy, which reduced him to ſo weak a ſtate of health, that when the packet ſailed again he was unable to proceed, but was obliged to remain ſome time longer at the Cape. The circumſtance of an Engliſh gentleman's being left there in ſuch a ſituation, coming to the knowledge of the Dutch Governor, he ſhewed him every attention poſſible, and contributed by this means in ſome meaſure to his recovery, and very much to rendering his ſtay more comfortable.

When Anneſley was able to go out, he conſtantly went every morning down to the Bay, to the place where the Engliſh ſhips anchor, in order to watch their arrival, as he began to be impatient to ſet forward for India. That done, he commonly took a ramble, ſometimes

times along the ſhore, ſometimes into the country, as exerciſe was particularly recommended. One morning, on quitting the landing place, he turned into a path by which he aſcended to the top of a ſteep rock which hung over the beach; here he ſtood for ſome time contemplating the magnificent expanſe of water before him; and at length perceiving a narrow winding foot-way down the other ſide of the rock, he deſcended by it, and entered a cavern which ran for ſome way along the ſide of the beach, and which was lighted by crevices in its rocky roof.

He purſued his route through this cavern for about half a mile, when it terminated in a ſmall opening to the ſands, along which he continued his walk for near two miles, when ſuddenly turning round a projecting angle of the rock, the moſt beautiful ſpot imaginable burſt at once upon his view. It was a ſmall circular valley, not more than half a mile in diameter, ſurrounded by an amphitheatre of hills, excepting an opening to the ſea about half a furlong wide, from which Anneſley now beheld it. Directly oppoſite to this opening,

from the higheſt part of the hills, poured a vaſt caſcade, which falling down the ſhaggy ſides was broken into ſheets of white foam, till it terminated in a baſon at the bottom, the water of which was pure and clear as cryſtal, whence it meandered through a ſmall and pebbly channel down to the ſea.

The valley and ſides of the hills were clothed with the fineſt verdure, and planted in ſome parts with lofty trees, in others with ſmaller trees and ſhrubs, diſpoſed with the moſt pictureſque effect, uniting with

"Bells and flow'rets of a thouſand hues,"

to charm the eye, and with their perfumes ſcenting the ſurrounding atmoſphere. There the orange, with its mingled fruits and flowers, diſpenſed its ſweets around, and offered to the palate the moſt luxurious repaſt, while the paler beauties of the lemon and the citron united to form a fine and gradual declenſion of ſhades. There, up the tall elm, clomb the encircling vine; while the gourds weaker tendrils, claſped in cloſe embrace its neighbour oak; there the ſweet melon, without the art or

aid

aid of man, ran in luxurious wreaths along the ground, while near her roſe erect the crown-clad pine. Narciſſus there, abaſhed at his own change, hung down his drooping head, and gazed on the once pallid flower, empurpled now with hyacinthus' blood.

Anneſley pauſed with aſtoniſhment!—Never had he beheld ſuch a ſcene!—never could he enough admire it!—Too much ſtruck with the firſt view to be able to proceed, he ſat himſelf down on the rock on one ſide of its entrance, and there remained for two full hours abſorbed in contemplation; and he thought that he could have fixed his abode there for ever, nor wiſhed to ſet foot again without its boundaries. He quitted it at length not without reluctance, and with a determination to return again the next day, bringing proviſion with him, that he might have time to explore every part, nor be compelled to leave it till the ſhades of night ſhould warn him home. But what ſurprized him beyond meaſure was, that he could not perceive any traces of ſo ſweet a ſpot's being inhabited, or even being the uſual haunt of human footſteps.

In the evening he went to the Governor's, who was conſtantly at home at that time for the reception of company, and where he had uſually ſpent his evenings ſince his recovery. Full of the ſcene he had beheld in the morning, he had not been long in the room ere he introduced the ſubject, relating the walk he had taken, and ſpeaking in the moſt lofty flights of admiration, of the numberleſs beauties of the valley.

"Oh yes," ſaid the Governor, "I have heard much of that ſpot."

"But never have ſeen it! How much you ſurprize me!"

"Why indeed, my time is ſo much occupied with buſineſs, that I have little to ſpare for attending to the beauties of nature, eſpecially if I muſt go ſo far for them."

"And perhaps are afraid of meeting with the ſpirit," ſaid one of the company jocoſely.

"No, no, I cannot ſay I have any fear of her," replied the Governor, with equal good humour; "it would be hard indeed if ſhe were to make me ſuffer for the wrongs ſhe received from my predeceſſor."

"How!"

"How!" ſaid Anneſley, "is that delicious ſpot reported to be the abode of a ſpirit? It muſt be the ſpirit of one of the bleſſed then, and this is its aſſigned Elyſium."

"But how can that be? I never heard of the ſpirits of the bleſt taking theſe terreſtrial excurſions, it is only the damned that the powers above are ſo obliging as to ſend viſiting again amongſt us poor mortals."

"Ay, ay," ſaid another, "and I'll lay my life that the whole matter is this: You know the poor lady that walks there was cut off for gallantry, ſo I ſuppoſe her puniſhment for having entertained too much company during her life, is to walk about by herſelf now ſhe is dead."

Here a general laugh applauded the idea the gentleman had ſtarted; but Anneſley, wiſhing to learn more about this report, ſaid, "But, ſeriouſly then, is it ſuppoſed to be the abode of a ſpirit?"

"Such is the ſuperſtition with regard to it," anſwered the firſt ſpeaker. "There are, as I am told, (for I never myſelf did more than take a peep at its mouth) ſome ruins a-

mongſt the trees on the ſide of one of the hills, which formerly compoſed part of a ſpacious building intended as a country reſidence for the Governor. But the firſt who inhabited it, ſoon after he came into poſſeſſion, took it into his head to ſuſpect his poor wife of infidelity, and, without more ceremony, ſent a little dagger on an embaſſy to ſee what the middle of her heart was made of, concluding, I ſuppoſe from what had happened, that this ſame heart was quite hollow. Unfortunately, however, it was made like all other hearts, and ſo there was an end of madam and her infidelity together; but the walls of the caſtle, reſolving to revenge her cauſe, fell down, nor could ever be built up again, and there the poor murdered lady has roamed about ever ſince."

Here was another burſt of applauſe. Anneſley continued, "And is ſhe ever ſeen? or how comes it to be known that ſhe reſides there?"

"Few people ever go near it; but a party who went thither ſome months ago, poſitively aſſerted that towards evening they ſaw her run

in

in amongſt the ruins; and this report has ſo completely intimidated the good folks of this place, that the valley ever ſince has been quite deſerted."

"The man then," ſaid Anneſley, "who ſhould venture there now, would, I ſuppoſe, be looked on as a prodigy of valour, and ranked with the heroes of chivalry?"

"Undoubtedly! and if you have a mind, Signor Ingleſe, to ſignalize your reſidence at the Cape by ſome action of more than mortal proweſs, you cannot do better than go and explore thoſe ruins."

"And this bold adventure I moſt certainly ſhall undertake."

"Valorous Don Quixote! may all the gods proſper your enterprize." And here another burſt of laughter cloſed the converſation.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER XVI.

Yes, he has lov'd to transport's dire excess;
Has felt the potent eye inflict the wound;
Has felt the female voice each pulse oppress,
And grown a breathless statue at the sound.

MERRY.

ANNESLEY, the bold adventurer, Anneſley, ſet forwards on his expedition early the next morning. He walked about the valley, and the ſurrounding hills, for ſome time before he could find the ruins which were the deſtined theatre of his fame, but at length diſcovered them on the declivity of the weſtern hill. He made towards the ſpot immediately, and as he approached it beheld a man aſleep, at the foot of a large ſpreading tree, which grew in its vicinity. He ſtopped—he ſtarted back!—The idea of ghoſts had no ter-

rors

rors for his mind; but a human form, in ſuch a ſituation, was what he ſo little expected to ſee, that it ſomewhat ſurprized him; but he ſoon began to queſtion himſelf, why he ſhould be afraid; he had a ſtrong ſtick, and one againſt one was no odds, ſuppoſing the ſleeping figure ſhould, on his waking, betray an unfriendly diſpoſition.

He drew nearer and nearer; the ſound of his footſteps, though he endeavoured to tread lightly, ſoon awoke the ſleeper, who inſtantly ſprang up from the ground, and fixed his eyes wildly upon him, as if in aſtoniſhment at beholding a fellow-creature ſo near. If Anneſley had felt any kind of terror before, it muſt have been diſperſed in a moment, and changed to ſofter feelings, at the object now preſented to his ſight. He appeared to be a man of ſomewhat more than thirty years of age, and his dreſs and complexion were thoſe of an European, not of a ſavage inhabitant of that quarter of the globe; his figure was tall and graceful; his countenance uncommonly intereſting; and though there was a wildneſs in his eyes, it was not ſuch as could inſpire

terror, but rather ſympathy, ſince it ſeemed to proceed from a boſom rent with deep and tender affliction.

Anneſley, in a moment, felt irreſiſtibly attracted towards him, and ventured to addreſs him in Engliſh: "I am afraid, Sir, I am guilty of an unwarrantable intruſion on your privacy? if ſo, I beg your pardon ſincerely; chance alone directed my foot-ſteps hither; nor knew I, till I beheld you, that the place was inhabited."

The recluſe looked aſtoniſhed!—He ſeemed to underſtand the words addreſſed to him, yet to heſitate whether or not he ſhould anſwer. At length he ſaid, in a hurried and affrighted manner, "Whence come you?"

"From the Cape Town."

"And it was really accident that brought you hither?"

"Moſt truly ſo."

"You are an Engliſhman?"

"I am."

He leaned againſt the tree for a few minutes, in an attitude of deep muſing; then ſmiting his hand on his forehead, he ſaid, with a deep

a deep ſigh, "Ah, why do I think of England!"

"You would wiſh, then, to loſe the recollection of it?

"To loſe the recollection!—ay, for ever, and for ever, and for ever!"

"And why this wiſh?—Pardon my curioſity; I would not be troubleſome; but to ſee a fellow-countryman in ſuch a ſituation—to hear him utter ſuch a wiſh, fills me with aſtoniſhment!"——

"Wherefore ſhould it aſtoniſh you?—Is misfortune then ſo rare in the world that it can excite ſurprize?"

"Misfortune, it is true, alas! is not rare; but ſuch an *effect* of misfortune, I muſt own, excites my ſurprize."

"What! can deep-rooted ſorrow bear ſociety?"

"Why ſhould it ſhun it?—Solitude but feeds the flame that is conſuming itſelf."

The maniac looked earneſtly at him, "Ah, wherefore," ſaid he, in a tone of the moſt melting anguiſh, "wherefore did you come hither? this haunt was dear to me, becauſe I

hoped no human ſtep would ever more approach it:—Sorrow is ſacred, nor ſhould be diſturbed;—away! away! away! and look you guard my ſecret."

"I will be gone if you inſiſt on it;—yet, methinks, I fain would ſtay to ſhare and ſooth your ſorrow."

"Share it, and ſooth it!—Oh God! Oh God!—Hark thee!" and he clapped his hand haſtily on Anneſley's arm; then recollecting himſelf: "But no," he cried, "why ſhould I thus flatter myſelf? Is there a heart on earth that could really feel for me?"

"Is there *one*, do you ſay?—Oh, yes; there are ten thouſand;—misfortune is not more general in the world than compaſſion."

"I know not that!—But oh, I am ſo wretched!"

"But a friend"——

The maniac ſtarted;—he fixed his eyes wildly on Anneſley, and exclaimed, "A friend!"—then ſtriking his forehead again, while a feveriſh flush overſpread his countenance, "Oh no, no, no," he cried, "wouldſt thou be completely wretched, ſeek a friend and a miſtreſs!

treſs!—go, go, ſeek a friend and a miſtreſs, and damn thyſelf to irredeemable miſery!"

Anneſley was ſtruck;—he thought that he had here touched the maſter-ſtring of all his ſorrows; and ſo he had, for the poor maniac thought himſelf

"Deceiv'd by Friendſhip much, but more by Love!"

"And why," ſaid Anneſley, "do you judge thus harſhly of all mankind?—All friends are not a curſe to thoſe that ſeek them and a miſtreſs"——

"Oh, true, true, true; you are right, you are right; they are not falſe, they are not fickle; I forgot myſelf,—pardon me; excuſe my haſtineſs."—He ſtopped; he caſt an enquiring eye on Anneſley;—"but tell me, have you ever loved?"

"Aſſuredly I have."

"And was your miſtreſs kind?"

"As heart could wiſh;—I ſoon was married to her."

"Married!" he exclaimed, and then ſunk into a deep muſing, from which, after ſome minutes, recovering himſelf, he raiſed his head again; his eyes had loſt much of their

their wildneſs; his countenance was more compoſed; and he ſaid, "Forgive me, Sir, I pray you; I am not always maſter of my thoughts, and converſation is ſo new to me: —But you ſeem a gentleman; you ſurely will ſcorn to aim another arrow at a heart already too deeply wounded; you ſurely will keep my ſecret."

"Truſt my honour;—I will be ſilent as the grave on all that I have ſeen, or ſhall ſee."

"Will you go in with me, then, and partake ſuch fare as I can offer you? I have delicious fruits, but they are ſerved in a homely way."

"Moſt gladly will I accompany you, and think myſelf highly favoured by ſuch a mark of confidence."

The maniac conducted him to a ſmall apartment amongſt the ruins, which, indeed, was the only part that afforded any ſhelter from the weather. To this there was no door, but the entrance was cloſed up at night with a pile of faggots; the only bed was a heap of dried graſs and moſs, and the only ſeat a block of

of ſtone. He produced variety of excellent fruit, in a ſort of rude baſket made of twigs cut from the trees, and from a large hollow ſtone he filled a clean ſhell with water; and ſetting them before his gueſt, ſaid,

"Man wants but little here below,
"Nor wants that little long."

Anneſley was more and more ſurprized, and endeavoured to draw his intereſting hoſt into converſation, to which he did not appear diſinclined, and in which he found him ſenſible, pleaſant, and well-informed, and appearing to have a thorough knowledge of what is called the World. Yet, in ſeveral hours that he continued with him, he could not, by the leaſt hint, gain more inſight into the cauſe of his ſecluſion, than what he had before dropped of a friend and a miſtreſs. Anneſley was indeed ſo much pleaſed with his manners and converſation, and ſo much intereſted by all he ſaw, that he quitted him with reluctance, as evening drew on, and entreated permiſſion to renew his viſit on the next day,

to

to which the maniac conſented, on a repeated promiſe from Anneſley, that he would not communicate to any one the ſituation in which he had diſcovered him.

On the morrow, then, he returned: As he approached the dwelling of his new acquaintance, he diſcovered him, ſeated under a tree, appearing intent on two ſquirrels, which ſeemed perfectly tame, and were eating out of his hands. He was, indeed, ſo intent on them, that he did not immediately perceive the approach of his gueſt, who therefore ſtopped to obſerve him, and beheld him when the little creatures had done eating, preſs them to his boſom, and kiſs them tenderly, while they licked his face and played about him, as if ſenſible to his affection. "Ah," ſaid he, "can ſuch fondneſs, ſuch fidelity, exiſt in the unreaſoning brute, while Man, with all his noble faculties, is yet a ſtranger to faith, a ſtranger to attachment, and betrays thoſe ſooneſt whom moſt he pretends to love?" Then ſuddenly turning round and perceiving Anneſley, he ſprang up from the ground, and placing his two companions at the

the foot of the tree, up which they inſtantly ran, he accoſted his gueſt with the utmoſt politeneſs and courteſy.

They immediately entered into converſation; he was perfectly collected and rational, and made many enquiries about England, and the public events which had been paſſing there for ſome time back, but carefully avoided aſking any queſtions of a private nature that might any way lead to a diſcovery of himſelf. After a while, Anneſley obſerved on the ſquirrels with which he had ſeen him playing, and aſked if they had been domeſticated by him ſince his reſidence there?

He anſwered, that they had: "I found them," ſaid he, "young, and unable to run about; they ſeemed to have been deſerted by the hand that ſhould have cheriſhed them: I too, felt myſelf deſerted, and I ſympathized with them." He ſighed;—a tear quivered in his eye; he turned away his head; he wiped the tear!—"Yes, I ſympathized with them! Man had been treacherous to me; I thought brutes might be faithful, and I have found them ſo: —I fed them, I cheriſhed them, they throve under

under my care, but I could not bear to confine them, and I have always left them at large; they never wander far from me, and always come when they hear my voice; I love their little ſports, they ſooth my ſoul; and while converſing with them, I ſeem not quite deſerted."

As he ſpake, a kind of wild ſenſibility ſparkled in his eyes, which made him appear more intereſting than ever, and inſpired Anneſley with tenfold eagerneſs to know his ſtory.—"Oh, Sir," he addreſſed him, "pardon a curioſity which ſprings not from any idle thirſt of knowing what is not my concern, but ſolely from a ſympathy which would feel the higheſt ſatisfaction in relieving ſorrows, that, to judge from appearance, are of no common magnitude; my heart, believe me, is not formed of adamant, and only ſeeks in wiſhing to know your ſtory, to uſe every exertion for ameliorating your ſituation."

"Ameliorating my ſituation!—Oh, can that ever be! You ſay you are a huſband; I too had once a wife; but let me not think of it!—Oh, had I followed her to the grave, I could

could have borne it; I could have ſubdued my feelings!—but"——he could proceed no farther, his voice was choaked by a torrent of unutterable anguiſh, and he threw himſelf on the ground to hide tears which he could not reſtrain, while Anneſley wiped reſponſive drops of ſympathy from his eyes.

After ſome minutes of ſilence, the maniac roſe up again; "Come," he ſaid, "ſit down with me under the ſhade of this tree;—you look earneſtly at me; you have been witneſs to all my weakneſs; but, oh, do not quite deſpiſe me!—I know that I have all my life given way too much to this morbid ſenſibility;—my early years rolled on in an even uninterrupted ſeries of proſperity, and I reflected not, that the day of adverſity might come, till I was overwhelmed with its arrows, which aſſailed me on all ſides;—and when I ought moſt to have exerted all the energies of man, I had yet to learn what thoſe energies were. Yet I have ſtruggled through ſorrows, difficulties, and dangers, in a manner not unworthy of the ſtrongeſt mind; but I have ſunk under them at laſt, and am

now

now only the poor feeble ſhadow of what I once was. Diſappointment,—repeated bitter diſappointment, has palſied every nerve in my frame; and when the pillars that ſupport the throne of reaſon are thus enfeebled, no wonder that the throne itſelf totters to its fall!"

"Yet, ſurely, it is a miſtake to bury yourſelf thus in ſolitude? Amidſt the buſy ſcenes of life, where the mind is inceſſantly occupied, where each event, each object, each idea, as it paſſes away, is ſucceeded by other events, other objects, other ideas, with equal rapidity; as, in the evening of the burning dog-days, flaſh after flaſh of vivid lightning, courſe each other along the clouds—amidſt ſuch ſcenes, the heavieſt diſappointments may be overcome. But, in a ſolitude like this, the mind brooding ſtill on one only object, aſſociates every tree, every herb, every flower, which it daily beholds, with that object, and as theſe are never varied, the cauſe of its woe ſeems ever preſent, ever renewed; thus preying upon the frame as the ſlow conſuming fire, which, though it never burſts forth into a blaze; no

leſs

leſs ſurely, though leſs rapidly, conſumes the object on which it faſtens."

"Oh, Sir, I own, I own, the juſtice of your argument! but is it not equally true, that, however juſtly we may reaſon in thoſe hours of ſerenity, when peace ſmiles around us, and the unembarraſſed mind can yield itſelf up entirely to the dictates of a mild and refining philoſophy, — yet, when the ſcene ſhall be reverſed, when adverſity overclouds all our proſpects, and the precepts ſo imbibed are called into action, that, in ſuch a moment, there are few who can act wholly on the principles, which, in the ſpeculations of proſperity, they have ſo much admired? Think, Sir, oh think, that my heart, my ſoul, have from their earlieſt years been ſet on one great object; to obtain which, no difficulty ſeemed too mighty to encounter, no danger too great not to ſet it at defiance. I thought this object once within my graſp! I caught at it; it fled me; — I was frantic with deſpair, till I fancied I beheld it once more within my power, if I had but energy ſufficient to force my way through the obſtacles that lay between me and

its

its attainment. I puſhed on courageouſly; I thought myſelf on the very verge of poſſeſſion, when I found it was ſnatched away from me for ever; and ſnatched away by a friend too, whom I conſidered as a ſecond ſelf, ſo entirely had he wound himſelf about my heart.—Oh, it was too much to bear!—the world became hateful to me; each man that I beheld was as a blaſt of the ſirocco to my frame! each woman, like the ſerpent, which, while the danger is yet unſeen, ſtrikes with the ſtroke of death!—I could not endure ſuch miſery, and I fled it for ever!" He pauſed a minute; he turned his eyes up to heaven; he claſped his hands together;—"and yet, wherefore do I condemn them! Villainy, too proſperous villainy, has led them into a fatal deluſion; nor are they leſs deſerving of compaſſion than myſelf!—but they are leſs miſerable, for they know not the occaſion they have for remorſe;—to them, ignorance is bliſs; to me, knowledge is diſtraction!"

"Theſe are ſorrows of no trivial nature, I own; but yet, reflect, Sir; are there not equal ſorrows to be met with in the ſad catalogue

logue of human calamities? and were all who are miſerable thus to ſeclude themſelves, what would become of ſociety?—Not to mention numberleſs other cauſes of unhappineſs which at this moment occur to my mind, let me for once be an egotiſt, and mention my own ſituation, which you will ſurely allow to be ſcarcely leſs cruel than your's. I am here in my way to India, whither I am going in queſt of a hapleſs daughter; young, beautiful, and innocent when I parted with her; now fallen, fallen, fallen!—A friend,—ſtart not at the idea!—a friend has been falſe to me too!—I truſted this dear child to the protection of one on whoſe honour I had the firmeſt reliance; but he has debauched, has ruined her, and I am now going to ſee if a father's care, a father's tenderneſs, can recall the poor wanderer from the fatal path into which ſhe has ſtrayed. Oh, why did I ever truſt her from my arms!"

The recluſe looked earneſtly at him;—"Going to ſeek for your daughter!—going to claſp her to your heart! while I abandon mine without remorſe to a world in which innocence

nocence is expoſed to endleſs outrage, endleſs temptation. Yes, I have abandoned my innocent child! abandoned her to the ſcorn, the contumely of thoſe, againſt whom her helpleſs age will be no ſhield!—heavens! how could I be ſuch a monſter!"

"Return then to the world,—ſeek this child; cheriſh her, protect her, foſter her in your boſom;—ſhe ſhall prove a balſam to your ſorrows; ſhe ſhall chaſe grief from your ſoul; and in her ſmiles you ſhall again be bleſt, again be happy!"

"Oh, what a picture have you drawn!—would to God that it could be realized! But you know not the obſtacles that lie in the way of what you propoſe, or you would own, I think, that in a caſe ſo ſingular as mine, a ſecluſion like this is the only thing that remains for me."

"Truſt me then with your ſtory!—You know not how my heart pants to convince you, if it were poſſible, that you ſhould find me a real friend. Never, no never, on ſo ſhort an acquaintance, did I feel ſuch intereſt for any one; I thought it impoſſible that, at this time,

time, any thing could divert my attention from my child, for a moment; but you have taught me, that much as ſhe occupies my mind, there is yet room enough to admit no ſmall ſhare of intereſt for another."

The recluſe burſt into tears, and taking Anneſley by the hand, "Oh," ſaid he, "you have melted my heart! you have diſſolved all my reſolutions! I thought never more to have placed confidence in man, never to have held any intercourſe with human nature again! But you have taught me, that kindneſs, that ſympathy, are not entirely baniſhed from the world!—yes, I will once more believe that friendſhip is not a mere name, but has ſome reality, and I will entruſt you with my ſtory. Yet, not now, my heart is too much overcharged to bear ſuch an exertion at preſent; I muſt have time to compoſe myſelf;—my reaſon, weak as it is, has been ſhaken by our meetings, almoſt beyond its powers of bearing, and I feel my brain, at this moment, ready to turn. So it has long been upon receiving any ſudden impreſſion; witneſs the flights into which it ran yeſterday on behold-

ing you; ſpare me, therefore, to-day, but come to-morrow;—by that time I ſhall have armed myſelf for the encounter; and when you ſhall have heard all that I have to relate, you ſhall yourſelf decide, whether it be poſſible for me to return to ſociety?"

"And if it appear to be poſſible, will you then return?"

"I know not that. But let us drop the ſubject now; my head begins to ſwim;—let us talk of other matters."

They did ſo, and Anneſley ſtayed with him till evening, when he returned to town, pondering much on all that had paſſed, and impatient for the arrival of morning, when the curioſity, which he felt ſo deeply, was to be gratified.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER XVII.

Give me, great Jove! to punish lawless lust,
And lay the Trojan gasping in the dust;
Destroy th' agressor; aid my righteous cause;
Avenge the breach of hospitable laws!
Let this example future times reclaim,
And guard from wrong fair Friendship's holy name.

POPE'S ILIAD.

ANNESLEY had omitted his uſual viſit at the Governor's, on the evening of the day when he had his firſt interview with the maniac in the valley, principally becauſe he was perplexed in his mind how he ſhould anſwer the many queſtions which would be put to him relative to the adventure he had declared his intention of undertaking. But to abſent himſelf a ſecond time muſt appear particular, conſidering how conſtantly he had been

accuſtomed to ſpend his evenings there ſince his recovery, and he reſolved to parry the jokes which he expected would fly about, with anſwers of ſuch a nature as ſhould paſs without ſuſpicion of the truth.

But to the jokes he apprehended, and to the anſwers he had prepared, a ſtop was put ere they were begun. As he entered the Governor's room, the firſt object he diſtinctly beheld, was Rainsford in earneſt converſation with his Excellency: He had arrived at the Cape that morning with his party, without their meeting with any occurrence in their paſſage worth noticing.

The Governor turned round on perceiving another gueſt enter, which broke in on the converſation with Rainsford, who, all aſtoniſhment at ſo unexpectedly meeting with Anneſley, and, from a conſciouſneſs of innocence, never conſidering in how odious a light his character muſt appear to the father of Cecilia, ſprang forwards to take him by the hand, and expreſs the pleaſure he felt at the interview At the ſame time, a thouſand queſtions, as to what brought him there, how he left all friends

in

in England, &c. &c. were at the end of his tongue;—but all were repulſed in a moment by the chilling look and manner of Anneſley, who ſhrunk from him as from ſome dreadful apparition; and addreſſing the Governor, ſaid, "I beg your Excellency's pardon, I did not know what company was here;" and then haſtily walked out of the room.

Rainsford, ſtruck with his ſtiff and cold manner, and the haſte with which he left the room on perceiving him, felt in a moment the impreſſion which muſt ſtill remain on his mind, as to his ſuppoſed criminal conduct with Cecilia, and anxious to come to an immediate explanation, called out,—"Stop, Anneſley; ſtop, for heaven's ſake, and hear me!" But he was too much agitated to liſten to any thing, nor ſtopped till he arrived at his own lodgings.

The rapidity with which this ſcene had paſſed, ſtruck the company at the Governor's dumb with aſtoniſhment, and it was followed by a total ſilence of near two minutes, when, at length, his Excellency enquired of Rainsford the meaning of what he had juſt witneſſ-

ed; to which the latter replied with begging to be excuſed entering on an explanation of the affair, until he had had an interview with the gentleman who ſo ſuddenly left the room, and whoſe appearance at that place was to him a matter of the greateſt ſurprize. He added, that if the Governor could direct him where to ſeek for Anneſley, he would go to him without delay, and endeavour to clear up the preſent miſunderſtanding.

To this, a gentleman preſent replied, by tendering his ſervices to accompany Rainsford to Anneſley's lodgings, whither they immediately proceeded together. But Anneſley would not be ſeen, only deſired that Rainsford would leave his addreſs, and he ſhould not be long without hearing from him.

The addreſs was accordingly left, and Rainsford, with his companion, returned to the Governor's, where he paſſed the reſt of the evening, and then, with his lady and Mrs. Meadows, repaired to a lodging he had engaged for the time of the ſhip's ſtay at the Cape, where he found the following note:

SIR,

SIR,

AFTER the injuries which you muſt be conſcious I have received from you, there is only one way in which we can poſſibly meet; and ſuch a meeting I have a right to expect, unleſs you are as cowardly as you are baſe and treacherous. I call on you, therefore, to be at the landing-place to-morrow morning at day-break, whence we will adjourn together to a convenient ſpot for ſettling the affair in queſtion; I ſhall be provided with a ſword and piſtols, of which you may take your choice; ſeconds appear to me unneceſſary, but I will provide one if you require it.

I am, SIR, &c.

FRANCIS ANNESLEY.

"And he ſhall have the meeting he requires," ſaid Rainsford, as he finiſhed reading.

"Good God, Edward, what are you about!" exclaimed Mrs. Rainsford.

"Be not alarmed, my love, all will yet, I

hope, be well; nor will either of our lives be put to the hazard."

"Oh that it may be ſo! But, my deareſt Edward, conſider that Anneſley is haſty."

"Yes, my Anna, but I am cool;—truſt then to me."

She ſaid no more; ſhe knew that he was cool, nor would wantonly throw away his life; and ſhe knew alſo, that he carried his ideas of honour in this way to ſo great a length, that there was no ſubject whatever on which he could ſo little bear thwarting.

He ſat down, therefore, and anſwered Anneſley, that he would meet him at the time and place he mentioned, quite unattended, and thence adjourn to any ſpot he ſhould appoint; after writing which, he went to bed with perfect compoſure, in the full confidence, that he could bring his antagoniſt to a previous explanation, which ſhould put fighting out of the queſtion.

But Mrs. Rainsford was not quite ſo compoſed; ſhe ſaw him quit the houſe next morning with indeſcribable agony, and could with difficulty reſtrain herſelf from following him,

m , in the hope of preventing ill conſequences. Yet a moment's reflection convinced her that ſuch officious intruſions often create more evil than they prevent, and ſhe deſiſted, rather chooſing to rely entirely on her huſband's ſelf-command, of which ſhe had the higheſt opinion; nor did ſhe doubt that it would be exerted to the utmoſt, to appeaſe Anneſley's not unjuſt anger.

Rainsford found Anneſley at the place of aſſignation, and accoſted him, ſaying, "I am ready to attend you, Sir, whitherſoever you may pleaſe, only take care that we be private."

"Of that you may be aſſured," ſaid Anneſley, and he walked to the top of the rock whence he had deſcended three days before, when he firſt diſcovered the valley; then turning to Rainsford, he ſaid, "It is my purpoſe to go to a very private ſpot, about two miles, or rather more, from hence, unleſs you object to the diſtance."

"By no means, I will follow you to any diſtance you pleaſe."—He indeed ſecretly rejoiced, that Anneſley had fixed on a diſtant

place, as it would allow him more time to cool on the affair, when he would therefore be the more likely to liſten to reaſon.

They proceeded ſilently to the valley. Never was a more glorious ſpectacle than burſt on their view as they entered it;—all that Anneſley had ſeen of it before, was nothing to what he then beheld; the ſun was juſt riſen above the horizon, directly oppoſite to the caſcade, the waters of which,

"Ting'd with its fiery morning rays,"

appeared like a ſtream of liquid fire, and preſented an effect no leſs ſublime, than the torrents of flame thrown up from the burning caverns of Veſuvius or Etna.

Rainsford pauſed with admiration;—Anneſley and himſelf were the only two living creatures preſent; no ſound was heard, ſave the burſting of the billows on one ſide, and the daſhing of the water-fall on the other, accompanied by the varied notes of innumerable birds, ſinging their early carols to hail the glad returning of that orb, which cheers and cheriſhes all nature.

"And

"And this ſpot," ſaid Rainsford, after he had ſurveyed it in ſilence for a minute or two, "which ſeems to be the abode of all that is peaceful and harmonious on earth, you have choſen as the field of blood and vengeance!—Oh Anneſley, Anneſley, hear me!"

"No;—I will hear nothing, I came not here to talk, but to act;—chooſe your weapons, and let us haſten to diſpatch our buſineſs."

"Yet pauſe a moment, and ere murder be committed, let us come to a right underſtanding!—You ſuppoſe that I have injured you?"

"I know that you have injured me;—wounded me in the moſt cruel and barbarous manner!—once more, therefore, chooſe your weapons, for I am reſolved to have ſatisfaction."

"And ſatisfaction you ſhall have, yet not at the point of the ſword;—oh, hear me, hear me, when I ſwear by heaven that I have not injured you;—that——"

"Not injured me!—do you then dare to add falſehood to treachery and ſeduction?—

dare to deny what has been ſo clearly proved upon you? Why then are you now here?—But come, this is the coward's ſtale pretence;—draw, Sir;"—and he drew his ſword.

"Anneſley, you know me well, and ought to know that I am incapable of the baſeneſs imputed to me;—do but hear me!"

"'Tis falſe, I only know you for a liar and a coward."

"Liar and coward! Take care, Anneſley, leſt I grow as warm as yourſelf!"

"Yes, liar and coward! grow as warm as you pleaſe!—Will you not draw?" and he put himſelf in an attitude to fight.

"Yes, I will draw to defend myſelf, if you force me to it, but not for the world to harm you."

"I will not be thus fooled, thus inſulted, I came hither to fight on equal terms;—draw then——"

"Nor did I come hither to be a murderer;—hear me, then, while it is not yet too late."

"No, I will not hear any thing! oh, my child! my Cecilia! loſt, wretched Cecilia!"

"She is not loſt; ſhe is not wretched; by heaven,

heaven, I ſwear it:—hear me, then!—if you have any regard for juſtice, hear me!"

"I cannot, will not, hear:—I know that plauſible tongue too well to truſt it again;—defend yourſelf, or I will force you to it:"—and he made a paſs with his ſword, in order to compel Rainsford to draw his.

He, finding that neither remonſtrances nor entreaties were of any avail, but that he muſt fight, drew his ſword reluctantly, and a ſcuffle enſued; when, in a moment, their attention was arreſted by the lonely inhabitant of the place, who ruſhed from a little thicket, about half way up the hill above them, and with the ſwiftneſs of lightning, darting forwards to the top of the rock, daſhed down, in a part ſo tremendouſly ſteep, that madneſs alone could have deſcended in ſafety; when meeting a vaſt billow at the bottom, he plunged into it, and was ſwept out of ſight in a moment.

At the firſt glance of him, Anneſley, alarmed, dropped his ſword, exclaiming, "Help me to ſave that poor creature!" and purſued him with ſcarcely leſs ſpeed than he fled, Rainsford following in deep amazement, not knowing

knowing what to make of all he ſaw and heard; but they arrived at the ſea-ſide a moment too late; the object they ſought had juſt vaniſhed as they got there. They, however, inſtantly ſtripped, and plunging into the ſea after him, caught him returning on the back of another billow, and dragged him to ſhore, when Rainsford, looking on his face, exclaimed, "Merciful God! Charles Meadows!!!" —It was Charles Meadows, indeed, but inſenſible to the aſtoniſhment he excited.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The fostering breeze, that on its pinion bears
Salubrious dew to cheer the fainting rose,
Has for its recompence the flow'r's revival.

MERRY.

CHARLES being thus once more introduced on the ſtage, it is neceſſary that our eye ſhould

"Dart through the past its retrospective glance,"

and our hiſtory travel back once more to the cell of Jeipal, the derviſe, in order to account for our hero's *diſappearance* from thence, and *re-appearance* in the ſubſequent ſituations in which he has been ſeen.

As his benevolent hoſt ſaw his health every day recovering, he grew daily more and more fervent in his thankſgivings and praiſes to Brahma

Brahma for this wonderful cure, while Charles was unbounded in his expreſſions of gratitude to the derviſe, and wiſhes that he could recompenſe him in a manner anſwerable to his obligations. But to this Jeipal always replied, that the difference between his preſent ſituation, and that in which he firſt beheld him, was his ſufficient recompenſe.

His cure, at length, perfected, he only waited the arrival of a paſſage boat, which regularly paſſed, at ſtated periods, between Mongheir and Calcutta, in order to return to this latter place, and thence proceed to England, in the full hope of at laſt poſſeſſing the beloved object, the attainment of which he had always conſidered as the ſum of all human felicity. But, alas! ere this boat arrived, he was involved in a ſeries of freſh diſaſters and fatigues, which put his newly reſtored exiſtence into the moſt imminent peril.

Not far from the Derviſe's habitation, two Faquirs had fixed their reſidence, who were as remarkable for a vain-glorious diſplay of outward ſanctity, aſſumed as a veil to cover the deepeſt hypocriſy, as the Derviſe was for his

ſimple

ſimple and unoſtentatious benevolence; and while the one, not thinking of the praiſes of mankind, ſtrove to deſerve them, the others, without attempting to deſerve, were anxious only to gain them.

Theſe men had for a long time borne a ſecret and inveterate enmity to Jeipal, whom they conſidered as a ſtumbling-block in their way, and conceived that if they could blaſt his fair and juſtly-acquired fame, they might enjoy the larger ſhare of worldly praiſe and adoration which was now beſtowed on his ſuperior ſanctity, and receive the pious offerings of ſuch of their fellow-creatures as thought they ſtood in need of an interceſſor between themſelves and their god; offerings which, indeed, the Derviſe always refuſed to accept, and gratuitouſly granted his prayers wherever they were deſired; but this conduct the Faquirs always decried, alleging, that Brahma could not be ſatisfied with barren interceſſions, but required the richeſt preſents to render him propitious.

They had therefore long been on the watch for ſome opportunity of effectually caſting ſuch

ſuch an odium on the character of the holy man, as might at once efface all former impreſſions of his piety, and make him as much an object of general averſion, as he had long been of admiration; at length they thought the opportunity arrived, and reſolved to make Charles, whoſe reſidence with the Derviſe was a matter of public notoriety in the neighbourhood, the medium through which this blow ſhould be ſtruck.

They watched, therefore, for a favourable moment, when the young man ſhould be left by himſelf in the cell, to put their deviliſh deſign into execution; and one morning, one of them having ſeen Jeipal paſs alone within a ſhort diſtance of their reſidence, haſtened to give this information to his companion, when they immediately ſet out on their errand. They found the object they ſought aſleep under the ſhade of his favourite Banyan; they immediately ſeized and bound him hand and foot, and tied a roll of cloth over his mouth to prevent his crying out; then ſtripping him of his outer garment, they left him,

to

to execute the remainder of their villainous ſcheme.

They killed a dog which they had brought with them for that purpoſe, and dropped ſome of the blood on the garment, which they left on the ſpot, together with the knife which they had uſed in the ſacrifice, and then carried the murdered animal to the river and threw it in as far as they could throw, taking care to drop the blood all the way down to the water-ſide. This done, they returned to Charles, and dragged him along with them to a cavern about half a mile from the ſpot.

The plot ſucceeded for a time. The ſtrange diſappearance of the young man, which, through conſciouſneſs of innocence, and grief for his ſuppoſed fate, the Derviſe never ſought to conceal, gave ſufficient ground for the inſinuations which the Faquirs ſoon began to throw out, that Jeipal himſelf was the murderer. Who elſe, they urged, could have perpetrated ſo black a deed, or who could bear any enmity to a young man who could not have provoked his fate? and the unreſerved manner in which it was mentioned by the Derviſe might

might be only a cloak to cover his guilt. But the villains, though they triumphed for a ſhort time, were ultimately foiled. The tranquillity which the Derviſe preſerved amidſt all the contumely that ſurrounded him, ſpoke ſtrongly in his favour; and as no dreadful judgment overtook him, ſuch as the murderer is always expected to experience, his character inſenſibly roſe above the calumnies uttered againſt it, and the murder was thought of no more.

Ten days was our hero detained priſoner in the cave by the Faquirs, and on the eleventh they ſold him as a ſlave to a merchant trading om Mongheir to Luckipour, by whom he was immediately conveyed to this latter place. Had the occaſion of his reſort thither been to him a leſs afflictive one, how muſt a mind, ſo ſuſceptible of receiving ſtrong impreſſions from the ſublime ſcenes of nature, have been tranſported with that preſented to him by the confluence of the two mighty ſtreams, the Ganges and the Burrampooter. Theſe rivers after rolling from nearly the ſame ſource, but in oppoſite directions, for the ſpace of two thouſand miles each, here unite their currents and form

form a grand ſea of freſh water, interſperſed with numerous iſlands, ſome equal in extent, and all ſuperior in beauty, to that gem of the Britiſh dominions, that little terreſtrial paradiſe, the Iſle of Wight.

Indeed, not even ſlavery itſelf, or, what was yet more terrible to him, the extinction of all his lately renewed hopes of poſſeſſing Amelia, could render him quite inſenſible to the ſublime magnificence of the ſcene as it broke gradually on his view; but abſorbed in the admiration excited by

> This enormous mass
> Of ruſhing water, to whose dread expanse,
> Continuous depth, and wond'rous length of course,
> Our floods are rills,
>
> THOMPSON.

he for a moment forgot his ſituation, and was loſt to every idea but that of the grandeur of the objects before him.

Fortunately for him, his maſter was not of that deſcription of men, who, to the infamous practice of purchaſing ſlaves, add the ſtill more infamous one of ill-treating them when purchaſed. His only fault was, that he could

ſuppoſe

ſuppoſe that man, reaſoning, free-born man, could with any ſhadow of juſtice be made the property, the organized drudge of his fellow man; a fault, perhaps, for which the general ſyſtematic deſpotiſm eſtabliſhed in thoſe countries, is more to be cenſured, than Ragobah individually. He was ſtruck with the firſt appearance of this new property he had acquired; his countenance and whole manner beſpake a ſoul not born to ſlavery, and he ſoon grew intereſted in his fate, and deſirous to know how he had been reduced to ſo degrading a ſituation; for this purpoſe endeavouring, by all the means in his power, to gain his confidence.

In the former part of Charles's life, it might perhaps have required only to ſeek his confidence, in order to obtain it. By nature open and unſuſpicious, he was inclined to believe all men honeſt and open like himſelf, and ſcarcely attempted to conceal from any one what paſſed even in the inmoſt receſſes of his thoughts. But often deceived, he had now learned a leſſon, which how much ſoever he deteſted, he found neceſſary to be attended to, that men are not always what they ſeem, and was reluctantly obliged,

obliged, inſtead of his former confidence in mankind, now to ſuſpect all whom he had not tried. Thus he repaid the advances of the merchant with coldneſs, politely acknowledging his obligations for ſundry attentions he was daily ſhewing him, and indulgencies which he granted him, very unuſual to be allowed to thoſe in a ſtate of ſervitude. Still he maintained a perfect reſerve as to his own ſtory; and after fulfilling the daily taſks which fell to his lot, ſought, as his only conſolation, to retire into himſelf, and nurſe in ſolitude a gloom and melancholy which ſeemed likely to undermine his reaſon, as well as deſtroy again that health, to which, by the care of the Derviſe, he was ſo recently reſtored.

But after ſome time ſpent in this ſtate of deſpondency, he beheld with tranſport the black clouds by which he was ſurrounded, ſeparate over his head, and diſplay the bright figure of hope ſmiling on him, and holding up to his view a proſpect of better days. At the time of his arrival at Luckipour, his maſter, together with ſundry other merchants of that place, and of Dacca, were engaged

in

in a plan for fitting out an expedition to explore more fully the courſe of the great river Burrampooter, which yet is but imperfectly known. In Charles he had diſcovered, as he thought, talents and information, together with a thirſt of knowledge, and a ſpirit of enterprize, which would render him extremely uſeful in this expedition, could he be engaged to join in it; yet he was determined not to uſe any compulſion, nor ſhould he go at all if he went not voluntarily.

He propoſed it to him therefore, adding, as an inducement for his acceding to the plan, that at his return he ſhould be at perfect liberty, and ſhould be furniſhed with a ſum of money to go whitherſoever he might chooſe. This proſpect of emancipation, though at ſome diſtance, and to be obtained at the price of encountering many and unknown perils, was too grateful to the mind of Charles to admit of a moment's heſitation, and he accordingly embraced the offer with eagerneſs, and received his appointment as one of the principal adventurers.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER XIX.

What awful silence! How these antique towers
And vacant courts, chill the suspended soul,
Till expectation wears the cast of fear;
And fear, half-ready to become devotion,
Mumbles a kind of mental orison,
It knows not wherefore.

HORACE WALPOLE.

THE voyage went on very proſperouſly for ſome time, and promiſed fair to anſwer every end propoſed by the planners. But at length, in navigating that part of the river which runs through the country lying in the neighbourhood of mount Kambala, the boats having anchored on the ſouthern bank of the river, ſome of the party landed in order to explore the country, while others remained with the fleet. Charles with two perſons more had taken one

of the ſmalleſt boats towards the oppoſite bank, to make ſome obſervations there, when on a ſudden, a party of Tartars came down from the mountain, and attacking thoſe who remained with the fleet, murdered them, and ſunk the boats, after plundering them of all they could find. Charles and his two comrades, on the firſt ſight of them, began to make to the other ſhore with all poſſible expedition, but ere they reached it, a vaſt ſtone hurled by one of their enemies, fell on the ſide of the boat and ſunk it immediately. From this danger, however, our hero ſaved himſelf by ſwimming, but his companions ſunk with the bark, nor ever roſe again.

"And am I never to ceaſe being the ſport of fortune?" Charles exclaimed, as his feet reſted on firm ground and he began to climb the bank of the river; "and muſt it ſtill be fatal to every one to be aſſociated with me." He ſtripped off his wet cloaths, he ſpread them in the ſun to dry; but wherefore then, he thought, ſhould he repine? As to himſelf, had he not more cauſe to rejoice; ought he not rather to be thankful, that he only had eſcaped the general maſſacre?

What

What if he were alone in a desert and inhospitable country? yet he was free; and if the means of subsistence were not very obvious, life was easily preserved; the waters of the river would be a constant supply to his thirst, and he might from thence also occasionally be furnished with food. And, oh delightful thought, could he but push his way through these difficulties, his Amelia might be ready, at the end, to receive him with extended arms; an idea which was sufficient to support him through all, or even greater obstacles than what he had to encounter.

He knew, that by following the course of the river to its source, he should arrive at the mountains which separate the wilds of Thibet from the country watered by the Ganges; and could he but gain that stream, he should consider all his toils as at an end. He accordingly proceeded onwards with his usual ardour, till at length he arrived at the source of the Burrampooter, which he had now followed from one end of its course to the other, through all its various turnings and windings, and through an infinite variety of country and scenery.

All theſe had opened to him abundant matter for freſh reflection, and given him freſh reaſon for admiration of the wonderful phœnomena exhibited by this globe of the earth. And now, having loſt the guidance of the river, he had recourſe to a little compaſs, which he had in his pocket at his eſcape from the Tartars, and which he found of great uſe in directing his progreſs over the mountains, to the magnificent Lake Manſaroar, whence he beheld iſſuing the ſouthern head of the Ganges. He haſtened forwards at the ſight, and from an involuntary impulſe knelt down by its ſide, and taking ſome of the water in his hand, "Oh ſtream," he exclaimed, "be thou ever eſteemed bleſt, be thou ever eſteemed ſacred indeed by me, ſince thou bringeſt within my view brighter hopes, brighter proſpects, than my heart has long known:—Many are the days which I have ſpent a ſtranger, a vagabond, ſhut out from all converſe with my own ſpecies; the heavens my only canopy, the earth my only couch: but thou ſhalt guide me on to fairer ſcenes, and happier days; to cultivated plains,

and

and civilized inhabitants; to the ſoul-cheering proſpect of

"Flocks and herds, and human face divine."

His heart, over-charged with the feelings which ruſhed upon it at the firſt ſight of the ſtream, was ſomewhat relieved by thus giving them vent; and again he proceeded on his route, keeping to the ſouth of the river, till he arrived at the ſtupendous paſs of Gangoutra. Here he croſſed it, and went on for ſome time, without meeting with any adventure, till he arrived, one evening, at an immenſe encloſure, which he entered by a breach in the wall, under the idea of paſſing the night there. He now found himſelf in a wide extended garden, in the midſt of which roſe a ſpacious building, but he could not perceive the leaſt ſigns of inhabitants; and after contemplating the ſcene awhile, he felt aſſured, that this was the famous mauſoleum of the Emperor Acbar, at Secundrii.

A kind of half ſuperſtitious awe now ſeized on his mind; not that he expected to meet the ſpirit of the departed Emperor, in

its nightly viſit to the gardens provided by his ſucceſſors for its recreation;—but the ſolemn ſtillneſs of the ſcene, where no trace of any living creature was to be diſcovered, ſave the noiſeleſs reptiles which had there fixed their abode, where not a bird dared to intrude on the dreary ſolitude with its enlivening notes, nor a zephyr to ſtir a leaf of the neglected trees, had altogether, even to him who had long been unuſed to the ſound of the human voice, ſomething more than uſually awful. He walked about till the darkneſs drew on, when he reſted his head on the ſtep of the mauſoleum, as his pillow for the night, reflecting, with infinite ſatisfaction, that the next day would bring him to the town of Agra, whence the reſt of his journey would be made comparatively eaſy.

He had ſcarcely, however, laid himſelf down, when a hollow noiſe from the tomb, like a diſmal groan, at once aſtoniſhed and alarmed him. He ſtarted up, and perceived that it proceeded from the opening of a door, at the top of the ſteps, on which he had reclined;

clined; and he beheld, ſtanding in the door way, a figure, which a mind, given to the encouragement of ſuperſtitious terrors, would at once have ſuppoſed the ſpirit that inhabited the place;—it was clad in a long white garment, and the gloom in which it was ſeen, gave it the ſemblance of a perſon of more than mortal ſize. But the dread of apparitions was not one to which Charles Meadows was at all ſubject;—amazed and confounded, however, at finding himſelf in a ſituation not altogether ſo ſolitary as he imagined, he ſtood heſitating whether to fly with all poſſible expedition, or endeavour to learn more about the figure which he beheld; while that, on the other hand, ſeemed intent on diſcovering whether the perſon below was an individual, or one of a group.

When this ſcene had continued for the ſpace of two or three minutes, Charles took courage to addreſs the man in the Hindoo language, ſignifying, that he did not know the place was inhabited; that he came there only to ſeek a night's lodging, and if he had in-

truded improperly, he begged pardon, and hoped he ſhould be allowed quietly to retire. No anſwer was returned, nor did the man appear to underſtand what was ſaid, but, in a moment after, called out in Engliſh, to ſome companions, as it ſeemed, who had not yet appeared, "You may come on!"

To the tortur'd wretch
Stung by the pois'nous spider to the heart,
The sound of minstrelsy is not so sweet,
MRS. ROBINSON.

as that of his native language, to which he had been ſo long a ſtranger, was to the ears of the delighted Charles.—He could not forbear exclaiming, in a kind of tranſport, "Oh, heavens! what do I hear!—You are then an Engliſhman!"

The earneſt manner in which he ſpoke, ſeemed to make a ſtrong impreſſion on the man, who, deſcending the ſteps, ſaid,—"Yes, I am an Engliſhman;—are you alone?"

"Entirely ſo."

"Then we have nothing to dread!—and how came you here?"

"Accident

"Accident brought me hither; I am eſcaped from ſlavery, and have been long a wanderer."

"Eſcaped from ſlavery!—welcome then, indeed, to our ſociety:"—and turning again to the tomb, he called, "Come on, my comrades, all is ſafe, and fortune hath ſent us another companion."

Immediately four other men came forth and joined them; when it appeared, that they were Engliſh ſoldiers, who had been made priſoners, and kept in ſlavery, at Agra, for more than two years. From this they had recently eſcaped, and had taken refuge in the mauſoleum, in order to elude the purſuit which they expected, and had determined on that night to ſet forwards for Bombay, taking a circuit to avoid the town of Agra. When they heard ſo much of Charles's ſtory as he choſe to impart, they invited him to join company with them, which, after a little conſideration, he accepted, as perhaps a ſafer courſe for him than going down the Ganges, when he might be in danger of meeting with his old enemies the Faquirs.

For the first part of their route, they only travelled late in the evening, and very early in the morning; but when they were out of the reach of pursuers, they went on by regular days journeys, and in due time arrived safe at the place of their destination.

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER XX.

Is she then wedded?
For ever lost to me, for whom I bore,
With patience which I thought she might approve,
Each trying injury and fierce affliction;
'Twixt whom and me the holiest vows had pass'd;
Is she perfidious?

MERRY.

ON their arrival at Bombay, Charles and his fellow-fugitives were preſented to the Governor, and their extraordinary ſtories related. The ſoldiers received many compliments, on their exertions for their emancipation, and were declared at full liberty to go whitherſoever they ſhould chooſe; but they deſired only to rejoin their regiment, which was then ſtationed at Madras, and for that place

they were therefore appointed to depart by the firſt opportunity.

Of Charles, the Governor made many enquiries concerning his wonderful eſcape from the Tartars, and ſubſequent journey through the deſerts, and was ſo much charmed with the eaſy, unaſſuming, and polite manner in which he replied to his queſtions, and gave the narration of his adventures, that he immediately promiſed him every aſſiſtance in his power, in expediting his return to Calcutta, and begged to be favoured with his company as frequently as poſſible, while he ſhould remain at Bombay.

Not that Charles related the whole of his ſtory. He ſtill called himſelf, as he had done to the ſoldiers, by the name of Williams, and only ſaid, that misfortune had thrown him into ſlavery, whence he had been reſcued at the hazard of periſhing in the inhoſpitable country on which he had been caſt, and that he had connections at Calcutta, which induced his wiſh to get to that place. He gladly accepted, however, the Governor's invitation to be his frequent gueſt, as his mind was now reſtored

ſtored to ſo tranquil a ſtate, by the fair proſpect of a ſpeedy termination of his troubles, that he no longer wiſhed to ſhun ſociety.

At his ſecond viſit to the Governor's, on entering the room, he obſerved that a perſon preſent eyed him with no common degree of inquiſitiveneſs, at which he was ſomewhat ſurpriſed, as he did not immediately recollect ever to have ſeen the man before, nor could divine what might attract his regards ſo earneſtly. After a few minutes, however, the ſtranger ceaſed this ſcrutiny, nor appeared to concern himſelf particularly with Charles for the reſt of the day; and the latter began to think the whole was a mere idea of his own, and that the looks, which he fancied to be aimed at him by deſign, were only directed by accident; conſequently he concerned himſelf no farther with the affair; nay, even reprobated himſelf for the ſuſpicious temper, which he now found ſo ſtrong a propenſity to indulge.

He continued to meet this man frequently at the Governor's, and ſoon found that his name was Weymar; that he was an attorney

by

by profeſſion, and his place of reſidence was Calcutta; he was only come on buſineſs to Bombay. Charles then recollected having once had ſome trifling concern with him in his profeſſional capacity, and thus his inquiſitive looks at their firſt meeting appeared ſolved, as the attorney might probably be impreſſed with the idea, that he had ſome knowledge of his features, yet not perfectly remember where, or when he had ſeen him, and ſuch ſenſations would not unnaturally produce the ſcrutiny he had noticed. At the ſame time Charles was pretty well convinced, that Weymar had not finally recognized his perſon, as he would then probably have mentioned their former acquaintance, in order to its renewal; and as he himſelf wiſhed not to be known, he would not, on his ſide, make any advances towards reconnoitring with Weymar.

One day at dinner, the latter addreſſed himſelf to the Governor, ſaying, that he had that morning received a letter from Calcutta, which mentioned, that ſuch a buſineſs (naming that on which Rainsford went to England juſt before

fore Charles's ſuppoſed death) was terminated quite to the ſatisfaction of the Eaſt-India Company: "Chiefly, Sir," ſaid he, "owing to the indefatigable pains taken in its inveſtigation by an officer of the name of Rainsford, who was ſent for to England as a principal evidence in the affair."

"What! Captain Rainsford, who once belonged to the tenth regiment of dragoons?" ſaid the Governor.

"I know not, indeed, to what regiment of dragoons he belonged; he was once in that ſervice, and exchanged his commiſſion for one in a regiment of foot, which was going to India."

"Oh ay, the ſame, I don't doubt;—his name is Edward?"

"Even ſo."

"And he has been in the Company's ſervice eight or nine years?"

"That time, at leaſt."

"'Tis the ſame, then, I am ſure.—I know him well; as worthy a fellow as ever lived."

This was beyond Weymar's hopes, and furniſhed him with an excellent pretext for continuing the converſation. He proceeded, therefore,

therefore,—"He is indeed a moſt worthy character, and I am ſure you will rejoice to hear, that his ſervices are rewarded with a Colonel's commiſſion, and a very fine appointment at Calcutta, of which he is expected ſoon to take poſſeſſion."

"I am glad of it, with all my heart,—for I do not believe that the company has, in its pay, a ſervant of greater ability and integrity."

"And what is better than all, he brings with him a moſt charming wife;—he is lately married to a very rich young widow;—Meadows, I think, her name"——was, he was about to add; but the attention of the company was inſtantly arreſted by Charles's riſing from his ſeat, and haſtily quitting the room with a countenance as pale as death.

The Governor roſe and followed him,—"Good God, Mr. Williams," he ſaid, "what is the matter?—you ſeem very ill!"

"Oh no, nothing at all, Sir, nothing at all;—I beg you will not concern yourſelf about me;—'tis a trifling indiſpoſition,—only the heat of the room;—I am ſubject to ſuch attacks;

tacks; — I ſhall recover in the air; — pray do not follow me!" — and he hurried away, while the Governor ſtood heſitating what to do, but at length he ſat down again. Still not ſatisfied, he ſuggeſted that it might be right to follow him, as he was apprehenſive, from the ſudden manner in which his gueſt was ſeized, his diſorder might terminate in a fit.

To this, Weymar (who by no means wiſhed him to be ſtopped in any act of deſperation, to which the bitter doſe he had adminiſtered might urge him) ſaid, that it ſeemed merely an affection from the extreme heat, and the gentleman was probably right, in ſaying the air would reſtore him; indeed, he ſaw not the leaſt reaſon for alarm. Still the Governor was uneaſy; but the young man ſeemed ſo averſe to being followed, that he was fearful of being troubleſome, and beſides, he was probably gotten to ſome diſtance, nor knew he which way he was gone; thus he remained quiet, and renewed his converſation with Weymar. Yet, by no means diveſted of his anxiety, he ſent in the evening to Charles's lodgings, to enquire after him, when he was ſhocked be-

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yond meaſure, to learn that he had never been there, neither did they know any thing about him, and he blamed himſelf exceedingly that he had permitted his leaving the houſe. He purſued his enquiries; ſtill he could gain no tidings of his unfortunate gueſt, till at length, to his unſpeakable horror, he heard, the next morning, that he had thrown himſelf from a rock into the ſea, and there periſhed.

But, in hearing this, he heard more than was true. Charles, indeed, when he quitted him, haſtened to the rock, hardly knowing whither he was going, or what he was doing, and there threw himſelf down in bitter meditation, on an event ſo deſtructive to all his views and hopes. And could this really be fact? was the firſt thing that ſuggeſted itſelf to his mind. — Yet, wherefore ſhould he doubt it? did not Amelia's whole conduct, while he was in England, ſufficiently ſhew, that her heart was wholly eſtranged from him? and was he not, from the firſt, a fool indeed, to ſuppoſe that a woman's conſtancy could ſtand againſt the long trial her's was to ſuſtain, while he was ſeeking his fortune in India? What, though

ſhe

ſhe had afterwards written him a conciliatory letter, that might proceed from diſappointment in other plans ſhe had formed, and ſo ſhe might once more have had recourſe to him. Yes, this muſt be ſo; and he curſed her, her whole ſex, and, indeed, the whole world.

But no, — why curſe her? — Was not this juſt retaliation on her part? Had he not ſent her a living teſtimony of his own infidelity; and with ſuch an example conſtantly before her eyes, was it to be expected that ſhe ſhould remain faithful? And he then vented a ſtill more dreadful volley of curſes on himſelf. But to marry with Rainsford! — Oh, and could that friend, in whom he placed ſuch confidence, on whoſe integrity he had ſuch firm reliance, as even to truſt him with the important office of mediator between himſelf and his offended miſtreſs, could he have ſerved him thus? Could he have made uſe of the opportunities he had thus afforded him, to ſeduce her affections away to himſelf? Oh, if *he* could be ſo baſe, ſo treacherous, faith was not to be found in man! — But he would be revenged;

revenged; he would mar their promiſed happineſs;—yes, he, the injured huſband, the wronged friend, would hunt them through the world, croſs their path at every ſtep, and by eternally ſhowing himſelf, eternally upbraid them.

And yet, was Amelia, or was Rainsford really to blame?—Alas! no,—was not he himſelf, through the villainy of the Faquirs, ſuppoſed to be dead?—That was true;—yet ſurely they need not have been in ſuch haſte to marry; ſome little tribute of ſorrow was due to his memory;—but why ſhould he expect that? when Amelia did not love him, to affect affliction would have been ridiculous parade. But Rainsford might have ſhewn more delicacy on the ſubject, than to marry his widow immediately!—His widow!—why did he call her ſo?—ſhe never would allow herſelf to be his wife, and how could ſhe, therefore, be conſidered as his widow?

He adverted then to his poor Indamora;—and what was to be her fate? If ever ſhe had experienced kindneſs and affection from thoſe to whom he conſigned her, ſhe muſt now

be

be ſacrificed to a family of their own;—oh, why did he ever part with her! But he would go and claim her; fly with her to ſome remote corner of the earth, where ſhe ſhould be his ſolace, his only joy, his only hope, the barrier to interpoſe between him and a life which was become hateful. Alas! would he, could he, do this? What, go and ſee his Amelia in the arms of another man,—of Rainsford!—Oh no, it was a thought too horrible to endure!—But why not claim Amelia too? Was ſhe not his wife? Had they not been ſworn together at the altar?—It was true;—but Rainsford had a ſtronger claim than the mere oath, and would be ſupported by the law. Well, then, ſince it was ſo, he could never bear to ſee, or be ſeen by them again;—his miſeries ſhould be his own, ſacredly, wholly his own! To the laſt, he would ſhew, that his love for Amelia was of the pureſt and ſincereſt kind, nor ſhould ſhe ever be wounded with the idea, that he was ſtill alive; ſhe had reconciled herſelf to his fate, and if he thought that ſhe had done ſo too eaſily, he would riſe ſuperior to the littleneſs of reproach, to the

mean

mean revenge of undeceiving her as to his death.

With ſuch reflections he lay haraſſing and wearying himſelf till evening drew on, when, unable to reſolve upon returning to the town, he ſought a night's lodging in a hollow in the rock, and there lay, ſcarcely cloſing his eyes, or if one moment he ſunk into a perturbed ſlumber, ſtarting up the next, tortured no leſs by the dreams which haunted his ſleeping imagination, than the thoughts which perplexed him while awake. The morning dawned on him ſtill reſtleſs, ſtill wretched, ſtill wiſhing to fly from himſelf, had it been poſſible; when, at day-break, he aſcended again to the top of the rock, whence he eſpied a boat come off from a ſhip, which lay at anchor not far from the ſhore. Almoſt unknowing what he was about, he haſtened down to the beach, and arrived there juſt as the rowers had put two men on ſhore, and were turning to row back again. He aſked whence they came, and whither they were going? and was anſwered, that they were going off immediately for England; they had come to put two perſons

on

on ſhore, who had been on a viſit to the Captain, and their return to the ſhip was only waited for before ſhe ſhould ſet ſail.

He caught at the idea of a ſhip going to his native country; his father was inſtantly preſent to his thoughts; in his boſom he ſhould find conſolation for all his ſorrows, and he reſolved to go and ſpend his few remaining days amidſt his affectionate family. He eagerly enquired, therefore, if they would take him in as a paſſenger, ſince he was in urgent want of an immediate conveyance to England; to which they conſenting, he entered the boat, and rowed off unobſerved by any one. His ſo ſudden diſappearance, united with the ſtrange manner in which he had quitted the Governor's table, gave riſe to the idea, that he had made an end of his own life, —an idea which Weymar, who knew more about the matter than any other perſon, thought extremely probable, and wiſhed ſo much to be true, that he circulated it with all poſſible induſtry.

During the voyage, Charles's ſenſes continued in a very diſordered ſtate; ſometimes he

was

was in wild and extravagant ſpirits, at others, in a deep and ſettled gloom; and this latter diſpoſition prevailing when he landed at the Cape, he ſought to ſhun ſociety, and ſpent his time in rambling about by himſelf. It was by this means that he diſcovered the haunted valley, the beauty of which, and ſtill more its perfect ſolitude, ſo ſtruck and ſoothed his diſtempered imagination, that he inſtantly reſolved to fix his abode there for the reſt of his life, and there he had actually lived from that time till he was diſcovered by Anneſley, without holding the leaſt intercourſe with any human being. Roots, herbs, and fruits, were his only food, and the water from heaven his only drink; he never wandered to any diſtance from the ruins in which he ſought ſhelter, and his chief amuſement was the compoſition of poetry, which he ſtored in his memory, not being furniſhed with the means of committing it to writing.

When he firſt found that his retreat was diſcovered, although he knew not by whom, he heſitated whether he ſhould not inſtantly forſake it; but Anneſley, even in the firſt interview,

terview, had gained ſo much upon his naturally warm and affectionate heart, that he reſolved on a ſecond; in which, as has been ſhewn, he had gone ſo far as to promiſe on the next day to relate his ſtory. Indeed, the love of ſociety, incidental to the nature of man, had revived ſo ſtrongly in his breaſt in theſe two days, that he felt a conſiderable degree of impatience for the return of morning, and the renewal of his converſation with his intereſting friend. Contrary, therefore, to his uſual practice of remaining in or about his own dwelling, he had wandered, at the firſt appearance of dawn, to that part of the valley at which his gueſt would enter, there to wait his arrival. His eyes were immoveably fixed on the beach along which he expected Anneſley to come, and his anxiety to ſee him was ſo great, that though the ſun was not yet riſen, he thought him late in his viſit, and began to fear that he would come no more.

At length he beheld him approach, yet not alone, as he expected, but accompanied by a ſecond perſon; — he thought himſelf betrayed; — he thought too, this new friend falſe and

treacherous, and he flew into a thicket juſt by, reſolved to hide himſelf till night, and then quit this beloved retreat, now, from being known, no longer dear, and ſeek ſome other ſpot, where he might remain in perfect obſcurity. From his place of concealment, he obſerved the two antagoniſts at high altercation, but it was not till the ſcuffle began, and Rainsford turned round, that the wretched Charles recognized his perſon. When he did ſo, ſuch a train of hateful ideas burſt on his mind, already but too much irritated, that his reaſon was entirely overpowered. He fancied he beheld a rival, the huſband of Amelia; it was too much to bear, and his only reſource was, to free himſelf from memory and exiſtence together.

Here let us obviate an objection, which may, perhaps, be ſtarted, that Anneſley and Charles Meadows muſt have been known to each other. That from their relative ſituations this was probable, is moſt certain; but it is alſo certain, that by a ſingular combination of circumſtances, they had never actually met, excepting at the Methodiſts meeting, when neither

neither was likely to obſerve the other, ſo as to be impreſſed with a remembrance of his features. When Anneſley was firſt introduced at Sherborne, Charles was at College, and did not return home till after the Lieutenant had quitted Shrewſbury. Again, when the latter's acquaintance with Miſs Blandford was renewed in London, it was only a few days before Charles's departure for India; and though Anneſley had viſited at Mrs. St. Aubyn's in that time, yet, as the lover of Amelia preferred her company above all others, ſo he was generally indulged with it in private, and thus he and the Lieutenant continued ſtrangers.

It may, indeed, be farther remarked, that even ſuppoſing Anneſley to have gained ſome idea of Charles's features, in the one tranſient ſight he obtained of them, yet, at the time of their interview at the Cape, he was ſo poſſeſſed with the belief of his being then no longer in exiſtence, that a poſſibility of the contrary never occurred to his imagination. And it ſhould be recollected, that in this belief, An-

neſley was fully juſtified, from his ignorance of any doubts having ever ariſen relative to Charles's death, as he had never heard the contradictory ſtories told of that affair, which were known to his friends in India.

CHAPTER

THE RECTOR'S SON.

CHAPTER XXI.

O fortunata coppia!
Che pianto ha seminato e riso accoglie:
Con quante amare doglie
Hai raddolciti tù gli affetti tuoi.
Quinci imparate voi
O ciechi e troppo teneri mortali
I sinceri diletti, e i veri mali.
Non è sana ogni gioia,
Nè mal ciò che v' annoia;
Quello è vero gioire
Che nasce da virtù dopò il soffrire.

GUARINI.

WHETHER the astonishment of Annesley at hearing Rainsford's exclamation, or that of Rainsford at finding again, in such a situation, a friend, of whose death he had scarcely dared permit himself to entertain a doubt, was the greatest, it is not easy to de-

termine; but neither of them ſuffered aſtoniſhment ſo far to overpower them, as to prevent their giving the unfortunate Charles the aſſiſtance which his ſituation required.

They bore him to the graſs, where laying him down, they uſed ſuch applications as were proper for his reſtoration, and ſoon perceived his breath and pulſation return, but yet unattended with any ſymptoms of returning ſenſe. Rainsford now enquired if Anneſley had known any thing of him prior to this moment; to which the latter replied by relating all the circumſtances of their intercourſe; but he could by no means account for the preſent attempt, as he had left him the evening before rational and compoſed.

"And why did you bring me hither on ſuch an errand?" ſaid Rainsford, "to add if poſſible to the horrors of our rencontre."

"It was in full confidence," anſwered Anneſley, "that we ſhould not diſturb ſorrow ſo ſacred, ſince in converſation my friend had told me that he never went any diſtance from his own dwelling on the oppoſite ſide of the valley, and

and I knew not of any other place ſo private for ſettling our difference."

They now conſulted together, whether it were better to let Charles remain where he was till the return of his ſenſes, leaving Anneſley alone with him, to learn if poſſible his motives for this act of deſperation; or whether they ſhould convey him in his preſent ſtate to the town, and there manage the neceſſary explanations to the beſt of their power. But while they were heſitating on this matter, freſh embarraſſments were added to their before embarraſſing ſituation, by the ſudden appearance of Mrs. Rainsford, Mrs. Meadows, Winterton, and another man, turning round the angle of the rock and entering the valley.

Mrs. Rainsford's anxiety for her huſband had grown to ſuch a height, from the length of time which had elapſed ſince his departure, as to become quite inſupportable, nor could ſhe endure to remain any longer quietly at home, and after much perſuaſion ſhe prevailed on Mrs. Meadows to accompany her in her purſuit, taking Winterton alſo with them. They went accordingly to the landing place,

where they knew the combatants were firſt to meet, and finding there a man of decent appearance, Mrs Rainsford enquired of him if he had ſeen two perſons, ſuch as ſhe deſcribed, on the ſhore, that morning; to which he replied by ſaying, "I preſume, Madam, from your deſcription, that one of the gentlemen you mean is Mr Anneſley?"

"Yes, Sir."

"I ſaw him, then, Madam, very early, in company with another gentleman, go down that rock which you ſee yonder, and I concluded that he was going to ſhew him a very beautiful valley about two miles off, which, within a few days, has become Mr. Anneſley's favourite reſort."

"Oh heavens!" ſhe cried, "then thither they are gone on their horrid errand—Oh, Sir, for heaven's ſake, direct me to the place, that we may go and prevent murder if poſſible!"

"Murder! how do you mean, Madam?"

"Oh they are gone thither to fight—pray direct me to the place!"

"I will do more, Madam, I will attend you thither; I may be of uſe if any thing diſagreeable has happened."

"Oh, heaven bleſs you! let us depart then!" and they ſat off under the guidance of the courteous ſtranger. When Rainsford beheld them, he haſtened up to them, alarmed leſt the ſight of her huſband ſhould come too ſuddenly on Mrs. Meadows; and addreſſing them, ſaid, "You may be quite eaſy about Anneſley and myſelf, we are perfectly ſafe, and have juſt reſcued a man from drowning, who lies there, and whom you had better not approach."

"Drowning!" exclaimed Winterton, who had advanced ſo as to recognize the body extended on the graſs, and whoſe aſtoniſhment was ſo great that he cried out, without conſidering the conſequences, "Has he then floated from Bombay hither, and is here reſtored to life? for he was drowned at Bombay, long, long ago!"

"Drowned at Bombay," cried Amelia,—"Oh God, my Huſband!" and ruſhing forwards to the body, ſhe fell ſenſeleſs by it; when, to render the embarraſſment complete, Charles at that moment began to move, heaved a deep ſigh, and attempting to raiſe himſelf up, opened his eyes, which unfortunately fell directly

on the ſenſeleſs Amelia, when uttering a loud and horrid ſhriek, he relapſed again into his former ſtate of inſenſibility.

"Good God," ſaid Anneſley, "what are we doing? we ſhall kill them juſt as they are reſtored to each other, for want of a little caution, Come, help me to bear this unfortunate man to his own habitation," he ſaid, addreſſing Winterton and the ſtranger who had accompanied the ladies; "while you, Rainsford, attend to Mrs. Meadows."

They raiſed Charles from the ground, and bore him to his own ſolitary abode, where Anneſley laid him on his moſſy bed, and ſat down by him to watch and manage his returning ſenſes, deſiring Winterton and the ſtranger to wait without. He lay motionleſs for a long time, but at length ſtarted up, as if awakened from ſleep, and beholding Anneſley, "My good friend," he ſaid, "I am glad to ſee you here; I am not apt to be ſuperſtitious, but I have had ſtrange dreams, which have grievouſly perplexed me; and the more ſo, as they ſeemed ſo like realities, that it is an unſpeakable relief to me to be now awakened from them."

"And

"And what were your dreams?"

"Oh, I muſt recover myſelf a little before I can relate them; but do you believe dreams are ever portentous?—I never was diſpoſed to think them ſo till this moment—but now—'tis ſo ſtrange!—they were ſo preſent to me!—both in their turns ſo preſent!—But it was the effect of the ſtory which I knew I was to tell you this morning—that dwelt on my mind."

"Who were preſent to you?"

"I ſaw you too, and I thought that you had betrayed me, that you were faithleſs as the reſt of mankind!"

"Which I hope and truſt you will never find me!"

"Pray heaven it may be ſo; but I know not what ails me this morning—I am in ſuch a flutter; my head feels ſo ſtrange. I have never enquired your name, but methinks, before I tell my ſtory, I fain would know it."

"Nor ſhall I object to telling it, but yet I would aſk firſt what has occaſioned this ſudden impulſe of curioſity?"

"I ſcarcely know myſelf."

"You appear to be very ill!" and he took

his hand, and preſſed it; "your hand burns, is any thing really the matter with you?"

"It is my dream!—I cannot ſhake off the impreſſion! I have told you that I am ſometimes wild; I am but too ſenſible of it;—miſfortune has ſo long purſued me;—and I am afraid my dream was the offspring of delirium!"

"Tell it then, and relieve your mind."

"I know not how!—I was prepared to place confidence in you; but, perhaps, this was a warning to me. My former friend I thought incapable of deceit, but he has wronged me cruelly! moſt cruelly! and ſhall I dare again to truſt the ſemblance of like friendſhip?"

The words he uttered, and even more, the affecting manner in which he ſpoke them, harrowed up the heart of Anneſley. This falſe friend, he now felt aſſured, was Rainsford! In the hurry of all that had paſſed, the remembrance of the injuries which he himſelf had ſuſtained from the ſame quarter, had been ſuſpended in his mind, but Charles's apoſtrophe brought it back again, and he ſympathized more

more than ever in his ſorrows, now he found that they were fellow-ſufferers from the ſame depraved heart. He ſcarcely knew how to proceed in winding him round to a diſcloſure, that what he fancied a dream, was a ſtrong reality; he addreſſed him again: "And did your dream then ſuggeſt a doubt of my faith? Yet truſt to me, believe not in ſuch fleeting fancies; aſk any teſt you wiſh of my fidelity, I will give it to you;—I will ſwear, if you deſire it, never to mention what you ſhall relate, unleſs with your permiſſion."

"Nay, you ſhall not ſwear;—what is an oath to a mind that knows not how to be ſincere without it? Yet, ere I repoſe my confidence too far, I fain would know to whom I am addreſſing myſelf."

"But, perhaps, the mention of my name might too deeply affect you!"

"Good God, then, do you know me? elſe wherefore this ſuppoſition? wherefore the idea that *your* name could wound me, unleſs *mine* were known to you?"

"Do you think your ſenſes now tolerably ſtrong?

ſtrong? you ſaid your dream had ſhaken them."

"God of heaven, what do you mean? Have I not dreamed then?—Was what I ſaw reality?"

"Strange things indeed have paſſed!"

"What! have I then ſeen her?"

"Seen who?"

"Amelia?"

"You have."

"And Rainsford too?"

"You have, indeed."

"Fighting with you?"

"Oh, even ſo."

"And who are you, then?"

"My name is Anneſley."

"Anneſley!—my God, I ſurely ſtill am dreaming!"

"No, you are awake!—what you have ſuppoſed a dream is really true! Say, can you bear to hear all I have to relate? Will it not overpower you?"

"No, no, my head is a little giddy,—that is all;—tell me,—tell me, how came you, and how came Rainsford and Amelia here?"

"Of

"Of the latter I yet know nothing; the meeting with them in this part of the world was unexpected to me;—but he, your quondam friend, had cruelly injured me: I was on my way to India to call him to account, but he has prevented that part of my errand; for when I knew him to be at the Cape, I was reſolved not to delay my juſt, juſt vengeance for a moment; I brought him hither to ſettle our difference, but the conflict was interrupted by your fatal attempt."

"Good God! and where then is Amelia?"

"Here, probably, at hand; I left her under the care of Rainsford."

"Of her huſband."

"Her huſband!—what do you mean?"

"But no matter!—as they have diſcovered me, I will ſee and reproach them!"

"Reproach whom?"

"Rainsford and his wife;" and he ſtarted up, and darted away before Anneſley was aware of him.

While this was paſſing between Charles and Anneſley, Amelia, by the care of Mr. and Mrs. Rainsford, was recovered from her fit, and had

had learned all that they could tell her relative to her huſband, when ſhe inſiſted on following to the place whither they had carried him. To his dwelling, therefore, they went, but were prevented by Winterton from entering it, and ſat down under the trees, Amelia waiting in tortures to hear more of him, and ſcarcely yet knowing how to believe that he was really alive; and in this ſituation Charles found them as he ruſhed out from Anneſley.

The moment they perceived him, they ſtarted up; he ſeized Amelia's arm, and fixing his eyes on her, remained immoveable in that attitude for ſome minutes, when quitting his hold again, he ſaid, with a countenance expreſſive of the ſtrongeſt affection mingled with the deepeſt anguiſh, "No, I cannot!—I would reproach you!—but is that a face and form to reproach? God of heaven, wherefore am I doomed to behold them again?"

"Are they then hateful to you?—but I deſerve it;—yet, oh, my Charles, believe me, my faults have not been greater than my ſufferings."

"Has

"Has he betrayed you too?—Has he proved as falſe a huſband as he ſhewed himſelf a faithleſs friend?"

"Alas! what do you mean?—it was my own blindneſs betrayed me;—but oh, my injured Charles, forgive me;—receive me as your true and faithful wife, and ſuch you ſtill ſhall find me!—Oh, this is almoſt too much!—to ſee you yet alive is ſuch unlooked, unhoped-for happineſs!"

"My faithful wife! Oh God! oh God!"—and he leaned againſt a tree in ſpeechleſs agony.

"And will you then reject me;—ſpurn me!—Yet I deſerve it, nor ought I to complain!—'twas thus I dealt with you, nor is this more than juſt retaliation. But my ſufferings cannot be laſting, death will ſoon end them."

"No, conſole yourſelf in your Rainsford's arms!—behold them open to receive you!"

"In Rainsford's arms!!!"

"Yes, in Rainsford's arms!—Oh Amelia, how tenderly, how madly I have loved you, my preſent ſtate bears witneſs,—yet I will not reproach you;—but never, never, can I take

take back the woman who could deſert me for another!"

"And have I been ſo ſlandered!—no, my Charles, though I rejected, I never ceaſed to love you, nor could another ever have ſhared this heart."

"Oh monſtrous, monſtrous falſhood! Can you dare to aſſert this with your huſband here before you?"

"My huſband!—What huſband?"

"Rainsford!—Are you not his wife?"

"His wife?—The wife of Rainsford?"

"Yes his,—his wedded wife?"

"No, who could dare to ſay ſo?"

"Not Rainsford's wife?"

"No, I am your's, and your's alone;"—and ſhe threw herſelf into his arms.

As the Meſanbranthemum of the Cape, after wearing the ſemblance of death for many months, expands again, and receives freſh life from the reviving influence of the liquid element; ſo was the long ſuppoſed dead Charles Meadows, reſtored to a new exiſtence by the laſt words of his adored Amelia. She was his, and his alone, and he claſped her to his boſom,

boſom, as a teſtimony that he was not deceived;—what more could he wiſh for?—could heaven itſelf afford him an equal tranſport?

A pauſe, a ſolemn and affecting pauſe of ſome minutes was the only means by which he could teſtify his rapture.—It was ſucceeded by a general explanation, and reconciliation, among all parties; in which ſtate of harmony let us take our leave of them, or only follow them to England, juſt to obſerve how much happineſs our hero's reſurrection diffuſed around him, and particularly how it crowned with joy the laſt days of his venerable parents, while he himſelf, reſtored to reaſon, to health, to cheerfulneſs, ſoon forgot amidſt his innumerable bleſſings, the ſorrows and fatigues through which he had ſtruggled in their attainment.

FINIS.

ERRATUM.

Page 141, Line 18, for *any* read *my*.

BRITISH
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